

Monday January 19 1998

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The Guardian

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INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Martin Kettle on dinner with Bill Clinton

White House wise guys

G2 with European weather

Return of the Mac

Who will get the knife?

G2 pages 10-11

Sport

England race to victory in West Indies

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Dole blow for job insurance claimants

Loan and mortgage pay-outs to be deducted from benefit

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

MILLIONS of people who believe they are protected from penury by taking out personal loan and mortgage protection policies against losing their jobs will find themselves denied unemployment benefit under a new government crackdown.

The step follows a ruling by the Benefits Agency that left a young County Durham man with £3 a month to live on because his dole office deducted £157 a month — the payout to him on his car loan and credit card insurance — from his monthly Jobseeker's Allowance of £160.

People who try to avoid the benefit deduction by instructing their insurance companies to pay the money directly to those demanding settlement of their debts face prosecution for benefit fraud.

Insurance to protect themselves from getting into debt if they lose their job should be penalised for doing so.

Allowance in 1996. But their serious implementation began only in November, when dole offices tightened administration as part of Harriet Harman's drive to drive down the £100 billion benefits bill.

as income where the money is paid directly to the claimant. The only exception is where the policies pay directly to the third party; it can then be disregarded.

The situation. The bankers' association, which represents many of the main policy providers, said it had not known about the problem until Mr Foster had pointed it out.

"In the light of this, we shall review with our members their current arrangements," he added.

Killing renews fears for peace

Blair meets Sinn Fein chiefs today

John Mulkin
Ireland Correspondent

THE Prime Minister will meet the Sinn Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness at Downing Street again today, as the Northern Ireland peace process hurches towards crisis once more after yesterday's murder of another Catholic.

row has opened on another front. Ray Seitz, United States ambassador to Britain from 1981 to 1984, accused the White House of leaking sensitive British security information to the IRA. He said Bill Clinton ignored his advice when he decided to grant a visa to Mr Adams in 1994, and labelled the move "either naive or opportunistic, or both".

ships involving London, Dublin, Belfast and the Scottish and Welsh assemblies. It is an Ulster Unionist idea, and rejected by Sinn Fein.

Mr McGuinness visited Mr McCusker's family yesterday afternoon. His mid-Ulster constituency includes Maghera, a predominantly nationalist town of 3,500 people.

McQueen bounces back



Alexander McQueen proved his critics wrong at his spring/summer haute couture show in Paris yesterday, writes Susannah Frankel. The models resembled a chorus of Madam Butterflies for the next millennium, showing the designer's vivid imagination to the full. Hubert de Givenchy recently described McQueen's appointment as a designer as a "total disaster". PHOTOGRAPH: JACK DABAGHIAN

Heroin supply to UK 'cut off'

Luke Harding

DETECTIVES have smashed a drugs ring responsible for the importation of almost all of Britain's heroin. It was claimed last night.

Last Thursday there were raids on homes in north and east London. In that first swoop, £2.5 million of heroin and cocaine — some 15kg of drugs — were recovered, along with cash and firearms. Fourteen men were arrested.

Bupa invited to fund NHS review



David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

BUPA, the private health insurer, has been invited to sponsor a review of the future of the National Health Service as part of this year's celebrations of the service's 50th anniversary.

the NHS at Westminster Abbey, attended by the Queen.

authorities and trusts, the Institute of Health Services Management and the International Hospital Federation.

Inside The descendant among Labour Party members about welfare reform is highlighted in replies to a questionnaire. Page 5	Britain The descendant among Labour Party members about welfare reform is highlighted in replies to a questionnaire. Page 5	World News Britain's chancellor flies to Brussels today to defuse a row over Italy's ability to meet criteria for single currency. Page 6	Sport Shorten ended their managerial careers and headed Chelsea's title challenge by defeating the Londoners 3-1. Sport section, page 16	Comment and Letters Comment 26 G2 Quick Crossword 38 TV, Radio and Weather 46
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Minister ends cover-up over failed coding project □ 'Conflict of interest' as system's inventor oversees its development for health service

Fiasco of NHS computers exposed

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

A MINISTER is intervening today to force the NHS Executive to end a two-year cover-up over a senior member of staff whose computer company has made £2.6 million from a failed project for the health service.

Alan Milburn, minister of state at the Department of Health, has ordered the immediate approval and early publication of a damning

National Audit Office report into the £20 million development of a nationwide computer code which was supposed to standardise patient care.

The NHS, meanwhile, is to pay out another £3 million in royalties to the man's company. The deal expires in 1999.

Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General, ordered the investigation into the "conflict of interest" surrounding the appointment of James Read, inventor of the code, as chief executive on £70,000 a year at the NHS's

Centre for Coding and Classification, which used taxpayers' money to develop the system and urged hospitals to use it.

The centre was set up in Loughborough, Leicestershire, across the road from the headquarters of Mr Read's company, Computer Assisted Medical Systems, run by his brother Robert, which promoted the system.

Mr Read's company made £7.4 million from royalties for developing the system, which provided a computer language to classify all illnesses, parts of the body and treat-

ments, so that standardised letters could be sent to GPs once a patient was discharged from hospital.

Mr Reid was also paid £1.2 million to sign the original deal, half of which went to the company and half to himself. Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, admits in a letter to Rhodri Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff West, that of 22 hospitals that adopted the system, 10 have stopped using it. Of the remainder, only two use it in its entirety.

Under the deal, Mr Read's company could get commission if the scheme were

adopted abroad, and a big effort was made to sell it in New Zealand.

The audit office's draft report is said to be highly critical of the deal and of Mr Read's appointment. It attacks the former head of information technology at the NHS Executive, Ray Rogers, for agreeing it and also exposes breaches of personnel policy at the NHS. Involving the promotion of staff when Mr Read was chief executive of the centre.

Since the audit office began its inquiries, Mr Rogers has opted for early retirement

and Mr Read has been moved to an IT consultancy. His NHS pay is understood to have risen to £90,000 a year.

Civil servants at the ministry, including the former permanent secretary Sir Graham Hart, are said to have delayed agreeing the report because of the embarrassment it would cause senior officials. They are said to have sought to moderate its language and to delay publication until the project could be presented as a success.

Two versions of an evaluation report on the use of the code at Withybush General

Hospital in Pembrokeshire have been placed in the House of Commons Library. One contains strong evidence that the system is still faulty, with keying difficulties, mapping irregularities and a thesaurus that is "unwieldy and error prone".

The other report appears to be a censored version, omitting the criticisms. The auditing data also appear to have been rigged to avoid revealing the main difficulties with the system.

Publication will embarrass Stephen Dorrell, the former health secretary. He ap-

proved the original deal while under-secretary at the ministry in 1990, and expanded its development while health secretary in 1995. Mr Dorrell has no personal connection, however, with his former constituent, Mr Read.

Last night Mr Morgan, who originally exposed the deal, said: "This scandal is one of the biggest conflicts of interest known in the NHS and it is high time the facts were published. Millions of pounds of taxpayers' money has been put into a system which has been dropped by nearly half the hospitals that used it."

Review: Joanna Coles in New York



Ragtime... the trademark broken rhythm of the music is a telling metaphor for the cultural confusion of a nation on the brink of a new century

PHOTOGRAPH: CATHERINE ASHMORE

Powerful, poignant tale of injustice in the land of the free

Ragtime
Ford Centre, New York

BROADWAY is back. In November The Lion King opened at the fabulously refurbished New Amsterdam, and last night the new Ford Centre, a superbly ambitious and successful amalgam of the old Lyric and the Apollo, opened on 42nd Street with Ragtime.

It is a brilliant choice, showing once again that there is an alternative to Andrew Lloyd Webber's dumbing-down of the genre. Not since Les Misérables has a musical tried to be this intelligent, and it succeeds on a grand scale.

Based on the novel by E L

Doctorow, Ragtime follows the fortunes of three families, white, black and Jewish, in the early 1900s against the backdrop of ragtime music. What better vehicle to show the cultural confusion beginning to unsettle America than ragtime's trademark "broken rhythm"? As a musical metaphor it is powerful, poignant and political, originating as it did among people who, as Booker T Washington memorably put it, "were born into slavery and emancipated into bitter poverty".

The opening scenes of "ladies with tennis balls" reflect the brief, fleeting optimism of an America at

long last freed from the grip of civil war. Railways are traversing the country, the industrial revolution is under way, as is the assembly-line production that will make the Model T Ford a reality. Waves of immigrants are washing up on New York shores in eager search of success, and Harry Houdini is wriggling free from his chains. So are the emancipated slaves trekking up north to seek economic freedom. But like Houdini's audiences, they are the victims of an illusion. Poverty, racial hatred and complacency greet them at every turn.

Throw in a handful of suffragettes and a sprinkling of early trade unionists and it

does not sound an easy night's entertainment. But the combination of Stephen Flaherty's music, Lynn Ahrens's lyrics (they worked together on the film of Anastasia), Terence (Kiss of the Spiderwoman) McNally's reworking of the novel for the stage, and Frank Galati's directing has produced an obvious Tony-award winner that will race into the millennium.

By scene three, the action is under way. Father has gone to sea for a year to go exploring, and in his absence Mother, his middle-class wife played by Marin Mazzie, takes in Sarah, a black woman who has given birth to an illegitimate boy. It is not giving too much

away to say that by the end of the first act, Sarah (magnificently played by Andrea McDonald) is dead, killed by the police, and her boyfriend, Coalhouse Walker Junior (Brian Stokes Mitchell), is out for a terrible revenge.

Like most good tragedies, Ragtime's central theme is injustice. Coalhouse is doomed, and when Father returns from his voyage, the world and his wife have changed. His brother-in-law has turned into a political agitator and Toteah, a poor immigrant who arrived selling paper silhouettes, has made it big as a movie director. Nothing is as it seems: the old order has gone. "The era of Ragtime

had run out, as if history were no more than a tune on a piano."

"Warn the duke!" a little boy keeps shouting mysteriously as Houdini announces he is off to perform in Sarajevo. Even greater change is under way. As they say here in New York: Go See.

US Holocaust museum snubs Yasser Arafat

Martin Kettle in Washington

AN EMBARRASSED United States secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, criticised the Washington-based Holocaust museum yesterday for refusing to give Yasser Arafat the red-carpet treatment.

In an unwelcome row before visits to Washington this week by Mr Arafat and the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, Mrs Albright said that the Palestinian Authority chairman's visit to the museum should have been treated as a state visit and "would have been an important symbol".

Mr Arafat was persuaded by the White House and the state department that a visit to the museum would be an important gesture to US opinion and to Israelis, but broke off his plans on Friday when the museum's director said the Palestinian leader would not be treated as a head of state. Mr Arafat was welcome to visit as an individual, the museum said.

Mrs Albright said yesterday that the state department had remonstrated with the museum about its snub to Mr Arafat. "It would have been appropriate to have him treated as a VIP but I think that at some stage, whether on this visit or another one, some arrangement will be able to be made."

Mr Arafat is due in Washington on Thursday, two days after the Israeli leader. The plan for him to visit the museum was conceived by a US Middle East envoy, Aaron Miller, who thought he had persuaded the museum's chairman Miles Lerman, who is a death camp survivor, to accept a visit with full protocol.

Mr Arafat accepted the proposal, knowing that his visit would have been a highly



Yasser Arafat: 'welcome at museum as an individual'

charged gesture of reconciliation towards Jewish and other world opinion.

On Thursday the museum informed Mr Arafat that a VIP-level visit would not be acceptable. Mr Lerman and the museum's director, Walter Reich, said they had decided "not to get involved in a political dispute".

"The doors are open from 10 in the morning to 5.30 in the afternoon," Mr Lerman was quoted as saying.

On hearing the news, Mr Arafat immediately cancelled his plans. "He said yes. They said no. It's as simple as that," his spokesman said. "Somebody is still living in the past."

A Palestinian official was quoted as saying that the museum's decision expressed "a hostile sentiment against Palestinians, Yasser Arafat and what he represents" and did not help the Middle East peace process.

"We would have liked to send a message, not only to Jews but to the entire world, that we have no problem with any race or creed and support peace. But they insist on stereotyping us unfairly."

Blair seeks Tories' help over EU

Prime Minister asks Europhiles to join campaign courting more public support for the union

Anne Perkins
Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR is to make an unprecedented appeal to pro-European Tories to join him in a campaign to turn public opinion in favour of the European Union. In a move some Conservatives regard as a blatant attempt to worsen their divisions and hasten realignment, Mr Blair will ask them to help build a national pro-European consensus.

The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, has already signed up for a cross-party campaign. He said in a radio interview yesterday that it was the "best time for 100 years" for "finding a gathering point for the natural liberal majority".

But Michael Heseltine, the Tory whom Labour would most like to recruit to a pro-European campaign, said last night that he had not been directly approached and would not do anything which conflicted with his position as a Conservative MP and former deputy prime minister. He did, however, acknowledge the need to fight for public



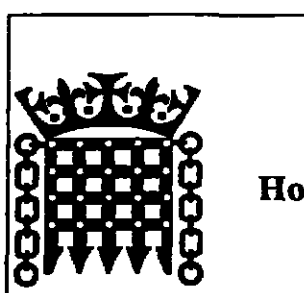
Now is the 'best time for 100 years' for 'finding a gathering point for the natural liberal majority'

— Paddy Ashdown



'There is a very serious propaganda attempt by certain newspapers and groups of politicians to disparage what we gain from the European Union, and it is necessary to counter that'

— Michael Heseltine



House of Commons and House of Lords

Review of Parliamentary Privilege

PARLIAMENT WANTS YOUR VIEWS

A joint committee of both Houses of Parliament chaired by a Law Lord (Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead) is looking at what special rights members of Parliament need to carry out their duties, e.g. freedom of speech, freedom to regulate their own affairs.

A short paper setting out the issues and questions is available free of charge by telephoning 0171 219 3327, by faxing 0171 219 0620 and on the Internet at: <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/privpnt1.htm>

LET US KNOW YOUR VIEWS

Please send your comments by 16th March 1998 to:

The Secretary
Information Office
House of Lords
LONDON
SW1A 0PW

Top flops

New Year BBC2, September 1991, 143,000 viewers, opera by Michael Tippett

Blond Eckbert Channel 4, July 1994, 152,000 viewers, opera by Judith Weir

Turn of the Screw BBC2, August 1994, 167,000 viewers, opera by Benjamin Britten

Silent Love Channel 4, December 1994, 190,000 viewers, short German film

Good Friday 1663 Channel 4, March 1990, 193,000 viewers, opera by Mike and Kate Westbrook

St Francis of Assisi BBC2, December 1988, 194,000 viewers, opera by Olivier Messiaen

Soviet Music BBC2, May 1990, 197,000 viewers

Listening Eye Channel 4, June 1990, profile of work with Britain's deaf

Heaven Ablaze in His Breast BBC2, May 1991, 200,000 viewers, ballet by Judith Weir and Ian Spink

Impulse BBC2, July 1991, 200,000 viewers, cartoon on advertising

Source: Broadcast Magazine/Barb



Mike and Kate Westbrook's opera *Good Friday 1663* (above left) attracted only 193,000 viewers to Channel 4, while Helen Mirren in *Prime Suspect* (above right) draws up to 10 million



Michael Tippett: his opera was least-watched TV show

The list contains three or four of the most talented people of the 20th century and it shows to anyone with half a brain that opera does not work on television. You wouldn't put Teletubbies on at Covent Garden, would you?

A A Gill, television critic

A nation switches off as the fat lady sings

Opera is Britain's least favourite television fare. **Kamal Ahmed** reports on a cultural low note

IT IS enough to make the arts establishment squirm. A report on the broadcaster's nightmare — television programmes that receive such dismal viewing figures that they score zero on the ratings chart — reveals that opera is the art form that gets Britain's most discerning viewers switching off most readily for the off button.

The study of the 40 lowest rated programmes in the last 10 years gives opera the dubious distinction of holding the bottom three places.

The figures, based on prime time viewing patterns and not including Channel 5, show that other arts programmes perform almost as badly. Classical music, programmes on arts exhibitions,

Kenneth Branagh and Sir John Gielgud all appear on the list, along with wheelchair basketball, a documentary about Jewish mysticism, and *Burning Books*, a literary discussion programme.

The figures, compiled by Broadcast magazine and based on statistics from the British Audience Research Bureau, put Michael Tippett's opera, *New Year*, at the bottom of the list. The opera, which was specially commissioned for television, attracted only 143,000 viewers on BBC2 in September 1991. The second lowest spot goes

to Judith Weir's opera, *Blond Eckbert*, seen by 152,000 Channel 4 viewers in July 1994.

It is closely followed by Benjamin Britten's *Turn of the Screw*, which drew 167,000 viewers to BBC2 in August 1994.

Other miserable performers include *Silent Love*, a short German film on Channel 4, *Heaven Ablaze in His Breast*, a ballet by Judith Weir and Ian Spink shown on BBC2, and *Dancemakers* on the choreographer Martha Graham, also on BBC2.

Swan Song, a short film by Kenneth Branagh on Sir John

Gielgud, shown on Channel 4, comes in at number 18 with 213,000 viewers.

"Britain's distaste for serialism, atonality, minimalism and most developments in music since Mahler is brutally plain," said William Phillips, who compiled the report.

"Some of the composers are supposedly famous — Tippett, Britten, Messiaen — but even Puccini, often cited as the last opera writer in tune with the masses, makes the chart despite [Plácido] Domingo's star role."

Senior music executives in

broadcasting admitted they were surprised at some of the entries. Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* appears, as does Puccini's *La Fanciulla della West*, which featured Plácido Domingo.

Of the 40 lowest rated programmes, more than a quarter are operas. Receiving a zero rating during peak time means that fewer than 250,000 viewers, or 1 per cent, watched the programme. Popular shows such as *The Bill* and *Prime Suspect* draw audiences of up to 10 million. Peak time programmes on BBC2 and Chan-

nel 4 regularly receive more than a million viewers.

"The list contains three or four of the most talented people of the 20th century and it shows to anyone with half a brain that opera does not work on television," said A. A. Gill, the Sunday Times television critic.

"You wouldn't put Teletubbies on at Covent Garden, would you?" Keith Cooper, marketing and broadcasting manager at the Royal Opera House, said it was still worthwhile broadcasting difficult operas. He said more mainstream operas

such as *La Traviata* and *Carmen* had been successful on television and that even 200,000 viewers meant opera was being introduced to a far wider audience than would visit an opera house.

"The Royal Opera House holds 2,000 people so we would need to get full houses for 100 nights to reach to same number of people," he said. "And on television it is also much cheaper."

Mr Cooper said the Opera House was looking at ways of using digital and pay-per-view television to get opera to a wider audience.

Jones 'seeks Clinton deal'

Lawyer says sex claim could be settled with apology and money

Martin Kettle in Washington

PAULA Jones's lawyers went on a media offensive yesterday, fuelling renewed speculation that they are seeking an out-of-court settlement of the confrontation with Bill Clinton over sexual harassment allegations that finally forced the president to give embarrassing evidence to lawyers in Washington on Saturday.

Despite a court gagging order that forbids any discussion of what went on during more than six hours of questioning, four of Ms Jones's legal team and her adviser Susan Carpenter, McMillan did the rounds of the Sunday morning television talk shows in an apparent attempt to put pressure on Mr Clinton to reach a deal.

Ms Jones's Dallas-based lawyer, Jim Fisher, said that he now favoured an out-of-court settlement whereby the

president would have to offer money and "some manner of an apology" but need not "grovel".

Leaked reports last week suggesting that Ms Jones was seeking a \$2 million (£1.25 million) settlement were "not completely accurate", Mr Fisher said.

"We are not asking for President Clinton to grovel or to admit every minor detail of our complaint, but we think there should be some accountability."

The White House and Mr Clinton's lawyers refused to comment on Saturday's extraordinary scenes in Washington, but one of the president's advisers, James Carville, said: "This is nothing but a big money grab by Paula Jones."

Ms Jones was unavailable yesterday after spending Saturday sitting at a table with Mr Clinton for the first time as he gave evidence on her charges that he exposed himself to her in an Arkansas

hotel room and asked for oral sex in 1991, when he was state governor. Mr Clinton has always denied the charges. He is thought to have said on Saturday that he could not rule out the possibility that he had met Ms Jones, though he had no memory of the occasion.

In another development yesterday, Newsweek alleged that it had obtained sealed documents containing damaging evidence against both Mr Clinton and Ms Jones. According to the magazine, the Arkansas state trooper who is alleged to have acted as Mr Clinton's go-between in the meeting with Ms Jones has testified that he escorted other women to meet Mr Clinton, before and after he was elected president.

Danny Ferguson is alleged to have said that he escorted a woman to a 5.15am rendezvous with Mr Clinton. Ferguson is said to have testified that Mr Clinton asked him to stand guard and watch out for the president's daughter, Chelsea, and to

have said he saw Mr Clinton and the woman embrace. The unnamed woman has refused to answer questions from lawyers, Newsweek says.

The magazine also says that Mr Clinton's lawyers have tracked down an Arkansas man who alleges that he picked up Ms Jones in a bar in 1991 some months before her alleged meeting with Mr Clinton and had sex with her in a car in a car park.

The case between Ms Jones and Mr Clinton is scheduled to be heard before a jury in Little Rock, Arkansas, starting on May 27.

If the case is settled out of court, the questions of money and an apology, which Mr Clinton has so far refused to give, will be uppermost. There is now also the awkward question of the videotape on which his evidence was recorded. Mr Clinton's advisers are reconciled to the likelihood that it will become publicly available at some stage, but they are determined to contest the contention by Ms Jones's lawyers that they own the copyright.

G2 cover story

Private health insurer invited to sponsor NHS review

continued from page 1
first research commissioned by the task force looks at ways of controlling demand for health care, including curbing unnecessary hospital referrals. The task force is to produce a draft report to the conference, setting out "scenarios of health care in 2020" and an "action agenda" for government and the NHS. Delegates will debate the ideas.

Bupa, which has more than 40 per cent of the private medical insurance market and also runs some 35 private hospitals, has been negotiating sponsorship of the task force along with drugs companies Lilly and Novartis.

Norwich Union, a smaller but emerging health insurer, has already agreed to be one of an expected 15 main sponsors of the conference. Each is paying £55,000.

Tim Baker, Norwich Union Healthcare's commercial director, said the company had been working with the NHS for several years. One of its most popular insurance packages guaranteed people treatment in the private wings of NHS trust hospitals. "We want to demonstrate our commitment to co-operating with the NHS and use the opportunity to show the sort of things we are doing."

Andrew Vallance-Owen, Bupa's medical director, said: "We are considering taking part in the task force, but we haven't confirmed anything yet."

The conference is to be held at Earl's Court from July 1 to July 3, when the Westminster Abbey ceremony will take place. The 50th anniversary falls on Sunday July 5, NHS Day, when special events are planned around the country.



It appears that the ethic of afternoon TV has landed like a job lot on the doorsteps of the chattering classes. Everything must go, while stocks last: divorce, illness, abortion, fatherhood, motherhood, death, bereavement. Michael Collins on how media fell in love with the new honesty

G2 Media page 12

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4 BRITAIN

Fourth victim of LVF terror

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

THE Loyalist Volunteer Force yesterday claimed responsibility for the murder of Fergal "Rick" McCusker, 28, near his home in the nationalist town of Maghera.

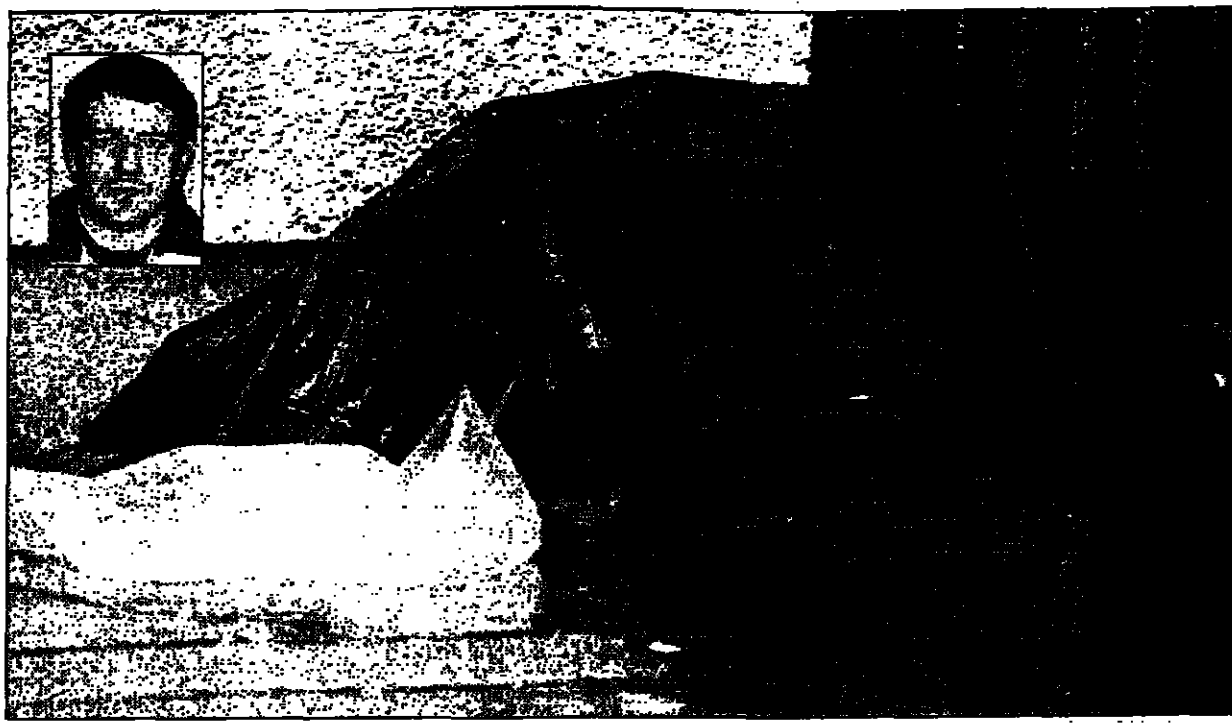
He is the fourth Catholic to die since the Irish National Liberation Army, opposed to the Ulster peace process, murdered the LVF leader, Billy Wright, at the Maze Prison three weeks ago. Friends saw Mr McCusker walking home in Upper Main Street at 1.15pm. He was a little drunk, but waved and called back. He was maybe 200 yards from his

front door. Six minutes later, the LVF shot him twice in the head.

Mr McCusker returned from the US two weeks ago. He had spent a year there, mainly in Boston doing odd jobs. He had started a new job with a heating contractor and plumbing firm.

On Saturday he had played football for Maghera Strollers. The LVF insisted he had been organising gun-running when he was in America.

Locals said that Mr McCusker, who was one of 10 brothers and sisters, was no terrorist. One woman, who has known his family for three decades, said: "He was just a normal Catholic boy. He was very popular. He liked his football, and played both



Fergal "Rick" McCusker (inset) who was found shot twice in the head yesterday

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN MCGILLLOUGH

Gaelic and soccer. Rick was never one to have a political bone in his body. Gun-running? It's as much as he could do to get himself on a plane. I don't mean to be funny, but he just wasn't that calibre."

Each of the recent murders of Catholics has been claimed by the LVF. Seamus Dillon, 45, a former IRA prisoner, was the first to die, hours after Wright was shot dead on December 27. He was working as a doorman at the O'Connell Hotel, Dungannon, Co

Tyrone, and was killed as he tried to stop the gunmen getting close to a disco packed with 400 youngsters.

The next was Eddie Treanor, 31, a housing executive worker. He was drinking with his girlfriend in the Clifton Tavern in a Catholic pocket in north Belfast on New Year's Eve when the LVF raked the bar with gunfire.

Last Saturday's victim was Terry Knight, 22, a community worker and father of two

daughters. He was gunned down outside a Belfast city centre night club where he was working to earn some extra money for house improvements.

The latest attack appears to be designed to show that the LVF can operate throughout Northern Ireland. Its strongest base is Portadown, Co Armagh, but it has branched out into Belfast, Antrim — where it was mounting road checks this month — and even the republican strong-

hold of Co Fermanagh. It says its membership is mushrooming.

Mr McCusker was murdered behind the Fairhill Youth Club, next to St Mary's Church. There seems little doubt the attack was pitched at provoking a republican backlash.

The pressure is building on the IRA, with four killings unavenged and a blueprint for Northern Ireland's future which it says is wholly unacceptable.

Don't apologise says Bloody Sunday officer

Stuart Miller

THE commanding officer of the paratroopers who shot dead 14 anti-internment campaigners in London-derry on Bloody Sunday will tonight urge Tony Blair not to apologise for the killings.

In a television interview, Lieutenant Colonel Derek Wilford maintains that blame for the events of January 30, 1972, should be laid with the politicians who ordered the Parachute Regiment into the city, and not with his soldiers.

Sunday, continues: "If people start talking about apologising, I think one has got to look at who was responsible for the decision to carry out that type of operation."

"What are they going to apologise for? Are they apologising for the government of the day? The military political machine of the day? Are they going to apologise on my behalf and my soldiers'?" I would have to warn them not to do so. They cannot apologise for me."

He is also critical of the authorities for failing to take advantage of the situation after he was ordered into the nationalist Bogside.

Although, he insists, his orders had been to carry out an arrest operation, and not to take over an IRA-controlled "no-go" area, his battalion had ended up occupying the area.

"They were offered an opportunity to take over the Bogside and regain proper control of it. They decided not to take that opportunity because there had been this shooting. I think they lost their nerve, frankly."

His comments come two days before the Prime Minister is expected to apologise in the Commons and order a fresh investigation of Bloody Sunday, which proved to be a turning point in the Troubles.

"I think the Prime Minister of the time should be the person discussing it," Lt Col Wilford tells a Channel 4 News investigation. "My soldiers behaved according to the very best standards of keeping the peace."

Lt Col Wilford, who left the army 10 years after Bloody

High level attempts begin to re-establish entente cordiale between Blair and Brown

Official bid to reconcile 'foes'

Ambassador who fell in love with UK

Martin Kettle profiles
Raymond Seitz (right) the former US envoy who has accused the US of passing information to the IRA



NO United States ambassador to the United Kingdom in recent years has been so readily taken to the heart of the British establishment as Raymond Seitz, and no US ambassador has ended up so close to that heart either.

The much coveted post of ambassador to London is a political gift of the US president, and successive ambassadors, including the recently arrived Philip Lader, have always been political appointees.

Mr Seitz was different. The Honolulu born Yale graduate was the first career diplomat to be appointed to the post, and, though posted initially by President Bush to succeed Henry Catto in 1991, he was retained when Bill Clinton took over the White House in 1992. Mr Seitz was eventually succeeded by Admiral William Crowe in 1994.

Mr Seitz, 57, joined the US foreign service in 1966 and had two spells at the London embassy before becoming ambassador. He was political officer from 1975 until 1979, closely observing the rise of Margaret Thatcher, and was again briefly posted to London in 1984. In between he

worked in Africa and Canada, and rose to head the State Department's European division.

On his arrival as ambassador, Mr Seitz rapidly established a reputation as an Anglophile, and was seen as an important counterweight on Irish questions to Mr Clinton's Dublin appointee, Jean Kennedy Smith.

Mr Seitz was a generous and legendary host and became a familiar broadcaster and lecturer during his period in Grosvenor Square. His love affair with Britain culminated in a decision to live in the UK after his retirement.

He has certainly prospered financially. He has built up a formidable list of directorships, becoming vice-chairman of the international bankers, Lehman Brothers, in 1996. He is also a director of the public relations firm, Shawwick, the communications giant, Cable & Wireless, British Airways, GEC and the Chubb Corporation.

He is a trustee of the National Gallery and of the Royal Academy. He is a director of Conrad Black's Telegraph Group, which yesterday began serialising his memoirs.

Anne Perkins
Political Correspondent

DOWNING Street was attempting to end hostilities between supporters of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor last night, after one senior source was quoted as saying: "Mr Brown is in a very strong political position now, but that may not last forever. No one is indispensable."

The Prime Minister's official spokesman flatly denied reports that Tony Blair had reprimanded Gordon Brown publicly over a newly-pub-

lished biography at last week's Cabinet. And, as the row raged between "friends" on both sides, he said that Mr Blair was "completely dismissive" of a Sunday newspaper report that insiders at No 10 regarded Mr Brown as "psychologically flawed".

There is growing concern about the damage being caused to the Government by the reports of a unhealed rift between the two, reignited by the publication last week of a biography of Mr Brown.

Although Mr Brown denies the claim that he authorised the biography, it sympathetically fleshes out the part between the two men not to

stand against each other for the leadership in a way unflattering to both Mr Blair and his ally, Peter Mandelson. It also makes it clear that Mr Brown has not given up his ambition to be prime minister.

Mr Brown admits he gave the book's author, the political journalist Paul Routledge, interviews, and his two brothers as well as close members of his team. His press spokesman, Charlie Whelan, also helped.

Last night Mr Whelan acknowledged that the way the book had been portrayed was a problem. But the press spokesman added: "Tony and

Gordon are very close friends and everyone knows it. None of these stories are true."

The Chief Whip, Nick Brown, has also come under fire for co-operating with the biography. He is an ally of the Chancellor and would have run his leadership campaign if there had been one. There are suggestions that his loyalty — a critical factor in the whole operation of government — is now being questioned.

There are fears that if the stories of a rift continue, it could undermine the welfare reform project. It is already clear that some Cabinet ministers are suspicious that the

Chancellor's main objective is to make cuts.

A memo from the Education Secretary, David Blunkett, to Mr Brown, leaked to the Guardian last month, which warned the Chancellor over cutting disability benefits gave an indication of the hostility to aspects of change.

Downing Street sources were last night playing down one welfare proposal from the Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, who is one of Mr Brown's closest allies. Last week she proposed an "affluence test" for some benefits which go automatically even to the wealthiest in society.

Downing Street indicated it was one of many ideas. A spokesman said the Government was still arguing the case for reform.

Sources in the Whips' Office also tried to stop the row. "Being loyal to the Chancellor does not mean you're being disloyal to the Prime Minister," one whip observed. It was also claimed that the basis for the row — the most damaging the government has so far experienced — was not the interviews given by Mr Brown's friends, but their interpretation.

Lander comment, page 8.



Got what it takes? ... Hopefuls gather to show off their act for Redcoat auditions at the Hippodrome in London's West End

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOOWN

Queueing up for fame

Emily Sheffield at auditions to be a Butlin's Redcoat entertainer

FOR David Jerome, being a Butlin's Redcoat is a lifetime dream and a family tradition. His parents met in 1971 when both members of the legendary entertainment team. His elder sister, Jenny, was a Redcoat last season, as was her fiancé, Now David, aged 18, hopes it is his turn.

He was one of 350 wannabes at the Hippodrome in London's Leicester Square at the weekend to sing, dance or joke their way into the coveted blazer. They came from The candidates were the first chosen from among the 2,000 who applied for 200 places this year at five Butlin's holiday centres and six hotels.

Each had 15 minutes to prove they had what it took to follow in the footsteps of former Redcoats Michael Barry-

more, Des O'Connor and Cliff Richard.

The Redcoats are a central part of a £139 million makeover for Butlin's. Household names since their creation in 1936 by Sir Billy Butlin, the Redcoats are best friend, guide and philosopher to millions of holidaymakers. By 1999 they will be doubled from 150 to 300, their uniforms of red blazers and white flannels brought up to date, and the best of them sent to a Redcoat "Academy of Excellence" to become all-round variety performers.

Allison Goodacre, aged 19, had been up at 5am to travel from Surrey. "I'm stage-crazy, I don't mind what I do as long as I get a job as a Redcoat. I remember them from when I was little, and how friendly they were. If I don't get the

job this year, I'll try next year and the year after."

Paul Beckett, an ex-Redcoat and now a Butlin's entertainment manager, said he sought "professionalism, presentation, energy, patience, and, above all, dedication to customer care".

"Being a Redcoat is about having a certain attitude of mind. You have to be a real people's person. It can be one of the most exhausting jobs, but also one of the most rewarding."

Sir Billy Butlin, holiday camp king, first came up with the idea for the Redcoats when he noticed his customers needed more than a cheap holiday and lots of knobly knee competitions — they needed a friend.

So he recruited ten of his best staff, gave them Red blazers and white flannel trousers and the Redcoats were born. They have been persuading millions of customers to return ever since.

David Jerome's mother, Lynne, is now a tap dance teacher in Portsmouth. She said it was the pure enjoyment of being a Redcoat that had youngsters queuing up to join. "Little has changed from 20 years ago — all the fun is still there."

"It's a great life, you won't get anyone telling you anything different."

Kevin Taylor, aged 23 and Redcoat of the Year, said the job gave essential training to those who had not been to stage or acting school.

Most Redcoats would stay with them for a few years, and then move on to bigger things. "I didn't know how to sing or dance when I joined five years ago, now I am turning professional. The academy will be taking that training one step further."

"Also, you are learning while having fun and making friends."

"What is nicer than putting a smile on someone's face?"

Cold comfort for the witty British

Dan Gilester
Arts Correspondent

ARE YOU proud, civilised, witty, cultured — and cold? Then you are probably British. By contrast, should you feel adventurous, emotional, temperamental, aggressive or even relaxed, abandon any notions of applying for a passport; you are almost certainly not British.

A survey by the advertising agency, BMP, of international attitudes to the British makes mixed reading. But if that list of adjectives is unsettling, it could be worse. The last time the survey was undertaken, in 1994, "witty" was not on the list. Instead "arrogant" featured as one of the top five defining characteristics.

The British are also consid-

ered slightly less boring than four years ago. That quality has dropped four places.

The survey, carried out in five continents, is intended solely for anecdotal use. Nevertheless, it contains some lessons: the British, according to one north American respondent, are not good at selling themselves, but they are good at mocking themselves.

"We thought that after the death of Princess Diana and the election of the Labour Government it would be interesting to repeat the exercise," said Chris Powell, chief executive of BMP.

"The people with the lowest opinion of the British are the British," said Powell. "This self-deprecating trait may well be one of the hindrances. If it was a company you'd think you had a problem."

School suspends boys, six, over 'sexual assault' on girl

Week Chaudhary
Education Correspondent

TWO boys aged six have been suspended from school, accused of sexually assaulting a girl in their class.

The alleged incident is reported to have occurred in the lunch break at St Anne's Church of England primary school, Liverpool. The girl, also six, told teachers she was chased by two boys, who allegedly kissed her and touched her private parts.

The mother of one of the boys said yesterday: "The school has blown this com-

pletely out of proportion." The mother, who cannot be named for legal reasons, said that after speaking to her son "to me it seemed like a game of kiss-chase that had gone too far. I couldn't understand the school's attitude. To confuse adult intentions and a child's game as 'sexual assault' seems ludicrous."

The Rev Myles Davies, chairman of the school's governors, said: "I am aware of the incident, and we will support our headteacher's decision to the full."

An education authority spokesman said: "Normal procedures are being followed."

The seventies are back. A proliferation of Hollywood blockbusters hark back to the time when Charlie's angels were the women we wanted to be.

Susannah Frankel

G2 page 4

مكتبة الأصيل

Activists in Euro rebel's constituency consider 'benefits' of a protest candidate for 1999 elections

Welfare cuts Labour open

Seamus Milne
Labour Editor

THE discontent among Labour Party members about government policies, particularly welfare reform, is highlighted in hundreds of angry replies to a party questionnaire sent out by Ken Coates, the European Parliament member expelled by Labour earlier this month.

More than half the North Nottinghamshire and Chesterfield party members who responded said they thought standing a protest candidate against Labour in the 1999 European elections "might do some good", while 13 per cent said they did not believe such a step should be considered.

The replies, which have been passed to the Guardian, reveal opposition to welfare changes and to plans to abolish existing Euro constituencies and introduce closed party lists — the issue which triggered Mr Coates's breach with Labour. There is overwhelming support for higher taxes on the rich.

The questionnaire returns — which cover nearly 10 per cent of the 4,000-plus North Nottinghamshire and Chesterfield Labour membership — also show that 41 of those who replied are considering leaving the party or have already resigned over the direction of government policy. That snapshot reflects leaks from Labour headquarters of a rise in the numbers of members lapsing recently.

Mr Coates, now an independent Labour member of the United Left group in the Strasbourg parliament, said the responses to his questionnaire reflected the "deep sense of betrayal" among Labour Party members in his area.

But Philip Dilks, spokesman for Labour's Central Region, said local Labour opinion had swung against Mr Coates since the questionnaire was sent last month, pointing to a 25-4 vote at the North Nottinghamshire and Chesterfield Labour Euro constituency organisation nine days ago to endorse his expulsion.

Mr Dilks conceded there was "unrest" in the party, particularly over welfare reform, which was why Mr Coates was taking the message to members around the country. "When you get a big influx of membership, you're never going to keep all those people when you've achieved a Labour government," he added.

Mr Coates has so far received nearly 400 replies to his questionnaire — some in the form of anguished letters — which was sent to all Labour Party members in his European constituency of North Nottinghamshire and Chesterfield.

It includes seven Westminster constituencies: Sherwood, Chesterfield, Bassetlaw, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire, Mansfield and Newark.

Of those who replied, more than 90 per cent backed Mr Coates in his stand against the changes to European candidate selection and voting procedures, 85 per cent wanted higher taxes on the rich and 74 per cent opposed "cuts in welfare spending" — specified as including reductions in lone parent benefit and student support.

On the question of whether a protest candidate should be considered for the European elections next year, 52 per cent said "it might do some good" — though 14 per cent of those said they also needed "more time to think about it".

Even allowing for the likelihood that those who responded were more favourable to Mr Coates's views than the average and the weakness of New Labour influence in such a traditional former mining area, the response emphasises the problems faced by Mr Blair in trying to sell his welfare reforms to his own party.

Leader comment, page 8



Derek Barlow: despite a triple transplant, he is deemed "too healthy" for disability allowance

'I can no longer remain a member as a result of the handling of myself and the disabled of this country'

DEREK Barlow, disabled, from Farndon, near Newark, Nottinghamshire, wrote to Tony Blair on December 14. "It is with deep regret that I feel I can no longer remain a member of the Labour Party as a direct result of the handling of myself and the disabled of this country."

"On Thursday of last

week I received three letters, two from the DSS and one from Motability Finance Ltd. The point of these letters was to tell me that I was no longer entitled to Disability Living Allowance.

"The reason given for stopping my benefit is because they said in 1995 I had a successful heart and lung trans-

plant. In fact, I had a heart, lung and liver transplant. It is far from a normal life... due to the side effects of the anti-rejection medication, I now suffer very painful joints, which can severely restrict my mobility. I also can't drive very easily due to the fact I contracted Hepatitis C, thought to be as a result of blood transfusions. Even if fit enough to travel by public transport, due to my suppressed immune system and low white cell count, I am at a high risk of infection from the bugs and viruses that can be fatal to myself. Most of us

would like to get into some sort of work wherever possible, but this cannot be achieved by taking away our benefits first."

Letter from Mr Barlow to Ken Coates, December 29. "It deeply saddened me to have to disassociate myself from the Labour Party as I have for many years believed in its principles, many of which seem to have been abandoned by the present government. It worries me to think this could be the end of the Labour Party as we know it."

'I am furious and feel completely betrayed'

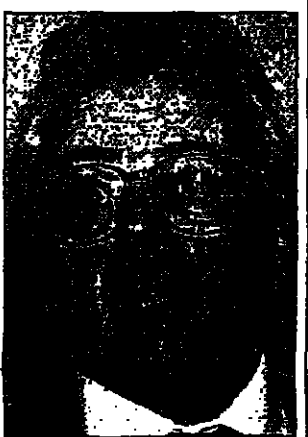
RUTH McEvoy-Webb, a lone parent and mature student, from South Nottingham, Derbyshire, wrote to Ken Coates on December 30.

"I am furious with the Government and their actions and feel completely betrayed by the party I have supported for many years. I returned to education in order that I may one day be able to provide an adequate

standard of living for myself and my son without having to rely on state benefits.

"The grant I receive is wholly inadequate to support us, so as well as being a mother and a full-time student at university, I am also forced to work part-time as well. But even this, according to the Government, is not enough and have further penalised me by cutting my lone parent benefit.

"I am completely disillusioned with the Labour Party and I am seriously considering leaving it. This is a situation I never imagined could happen."



Ken Coates: received angry replies to his questionnaire



Ruth McEvoy-Webb: irate over policies on single mothers

News in brief

Pilot arrested over Nadir's bail escape

A PILOT has been arrested and charged with perverting the course of justice in the escape of tycoon Asil Nadir from Britain to northern Cyprus in 1993. Peter Dimond, aged 56, a used car dealer, will appear before Bow Street magistrates in central London today.

He was stopped in a Range Rover on Friday at Fishguard in Wales waiting to board a ferry to Ireland, and taken to London by officials of the Serious Fraud Office. He is believed to have been living in northern Cyprus for the past 4½ years.

When Nadir fled in May 1993, he was on bail of £2 million and facing charges of theft of £30 million and false accounting. He had built up his firm, Polly Peck, to become a major conglomerate but in 1990 it had collapsed with debts of £1.3 billion. Britain cannot extradite Nadir from northern Cyprus, because there is no extradition treaty with the state, which is recognised only by Turkey. He runs a string of hotels there, but is in trouble over tax payments.

'Animal rights' bombs seized

A CAR stopped in Northampton on Saturday contained fire bombs and materials for making bombs, described by police yesterday as a "very significant find related to animal rights activity". Two men in their 30s, one from London and the other from Northampton, are being questioned.

The seizure follows a police operation in Camps Hill, Northampton, and the investigation is continuing. The officer in charge, Detective Chief Superintendent Peter Barclay, said: "This is a very significant find related to animal rights activities. A large team of officers and support staff will be engaged on the inquiry in the coming weeks."

Boy hanged by pyjama cord

A BOY aged nine found hanging by his dressing gown cord in his bedroom on Saturday night appeared to have died due to an accident, police said yesterday.

They would not say who found the body of Dale Clough, who lived with his parents, brother and two step sisters in Plymouth. A police spokesman said the family were "very distraught" and being cared for by victim support professionals. The spokesman said an inquest was expected but added: "This is not a suicide, it is not a game, purely a tragic accident. There are no suspicious circumstances, and no evidence the boy was depressed in any way, shape or form." — Geoffrey Gibbs

Missing children found safe

A WOMAN and her three children were found safe yesterday by Staffordshire police after an urgent appeal was issued on Saturday night when the children were reported missing from their father's home.

Aaron, seven, Nathan, six, and Stacey, three, were found with Mary Sheldon, aged 38, at a house in Stoke-on-Trent. The three had been living with their father, also in Stoke, under a custody order. Police said Mrs Sheldon had taken the children with her after having had an arranged access visit; they were now with child protection officers and she had been detained pending further inquiries.

Trawler towed out of storm

SIX fishermen on board a Scottish trawler are being towed into port on the Isle of Lewis after being adrift in heavy seas in the north Atlantic for more than 20 hours.

The Audacious 2 lost power when its engine room was flooded in bad weather to the west of Rockall, 200 miles off the Hebrides. A Norwegian boat, the Aarsheim Senior, succeeded in fixing a line to the trawler at the second attempt.

A spokesman for the Clyde coast guard said last night poor weather conditions meant the two vessels could take up to 70 hours to reach port. The trawler's crew all came from Buckie in Aberdeenshire. — Laurence Donghai

Gardeners coming up roses

MEMBERSHIP of the Royal Horticultural Society is about to top a quarter of a million after a 45 per cent growth over the past five years.

The gardening charity hopes this year to spread its membership outside the Home Counties to Scotland, the North-west of England and East Anglia. It proposes that 2004 be designated the year of the garden, to mark the society's bicentenary.

Four tickets share £15.8m

FOUR tickets won £3.9 million each in Saturday's lottery. The jackpot of £15.8 million included £4.7 million rolled over from Wednesday. Winning numbers were 14, 31, 33, 35, 46, and 46; bonus ball 36.

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Brown faces early euro test

Martin Walker in Brussels

BRTAIN'S Chancellor, Gordon Brown, flies to Brussels today for his first test as chairman of the European Union finance ministers, to defuse a row about Dutch and German doubts over Italy's ability to meet the debt and budgetary criteria for membership of the European single currency.

Mr Brown had not expected Britain's promise to be an honest broker on the euro's launch to be tested so soon.

An equivocal report to be published in Brussels today by the EU's top monetary officials gives fuel to Italy's critics.

The report generally gives Italy high marks for cutting its budget deficit to 2.7 per cent of GDP last year, and an expected 2.8 per cent this year.

But the EU's monetary committee notes that Italy's debt, at more than 120 per cent of GDP, is more than double the 60 per cent ceiling set by the Maastricht criteria for euro membership.

Moreover, the monetary committee warns that Italy's plans to cut pensions do not go far enough, because of the "anomaly" which allows some workers to retire and draw pensions from the age of 50. The committee also cau-

tions that recent improvements in Italy's budget position through measures like the imposition of an emergency "euro-tax" cannot be repeated.

Italy last week assured the committee that its new strategy plan would cut public debt to 60 per cent of GDP within 10 to 15 years. But Rome's calculations rest on the assumption that it will be in the first wave of euro membership, and that this in turn

will so lower interest rates that the treasury will save billions of pounds a year in interest payments.

The row erupted last week when senior Dutch politicians leaked their cabinet's

The row centres on Italy's debt which is more than double the Maastricht ceiling

doubts about Italy to the German press. Although the Dutch finance minister, Gerrit Zalm, denied he had threatened to resign if Italy made the euro's first wave, Frits Bolkestein, the leader of the liberal People's Party for

Freedom and Democracy (VVD), a key member of the Dutch coalition government, made no secret of his own opposition to weakening the euro by including the Italian lira.

The reports were seized on in Germany, where Chancellor Helmut Kohl's public campaign for the euro faces hostile opinion polls and a new challenge before the constitutional court.

The Dutch problem is aggravated by a row over the first head of the European central bank. The job was apparently reserved for the Netherlands' central banker, Wim Duisenberg, until the French suddenly put forward

their own central bank candidate, Jean-Claude Trichet. This is another row that will test Mr Brown's six-month chairmanship of the finance ministers committee.

All this takes place against the background of the Asian financial crisis, which will see the euro launched in far more turbulent and risky circumstances than the EU had hoped.

Mr Brown also this week faces his first grilling by the European Parliament's economic and monetary committee, where the campaign by MEPs to win more political influence over the new central bank's monetary policies is gathering force.

News in brief

Moderate PM chosen by Bosnian Serbs

THE election of a moderate Bosnian Serb government including Muslim parties won international support yesterday. After months of infighting between rival Bosnian Serb factions, Milorad Dodik, the leader of the Independent Social Democrats, was elected prime minister of a government of national unity. Hardline nationalists boycotted the vote, calling Mr Dodik a "totally unacceptable" figure. Carlos Westendorp, the international High Representative for Bosnia, hailed the new government as a step forward. — *Karen Coleman, Belgrade.*

Islamist ban defended

THE Turkish president, Suleyman Demirel, said at the weekend that banning the Islamist party Welfare had been a regrettable legal necessity. "Nobody has the right or privilege to violate the laws of the republic of Turkey," he was quoted as saying. Welfare was banned on Friday. — *Reuters, Ankara.*

Guyanese rivals agree deal

GUYANA'S president, Janet Jagan, and the main opposition leader, Desmond Hoyte, signed an agreement at the weekend ending an impasse over last month's presidential elections which sparked violent protests in the capital Georgetown. Under the accord, reforms will pave the way for fresh elections within three years and last month's election results will be independently audited. — *Reuters, Georgetown.*

Offer to Lumumba killers

CONGO'S president, Laurent Kabila, said at the weekend that the killers of Patrice Lumumba, the country's first post-independence prime minister, will be pardoned — but only if they ask for forgiveness. In a speech marking the 50th anniversary of Lumumba's assassination, he said: "Many of the leaders that you have known are behind this famous treason. We know them, we are often side by side with them." — *AP, Kinshasa.*

Chiapas report damns police

HOURS after 45 Indian refugees were slaughtered in Mexico's southern state of Chiapas last month, the paramilitaries responsible were captured by police but later freed and given their weapons back, a government human rights report says. The report says state officials and police either helped plan the massacre or turned a blind eye. — *Reuters, Mexico City.*



The Pope with Catholic youth activists (above) frees white doves from his flat at the Vatican yesterday, while Fidel Castro (below) contemplates

Castro calls out the faithful

Phil Gimson in Havana

DESPITE a call by President Fidel Castro for Cubans to give the Pope a warm welcome when he arrives in Havana on Wednesday, there is little sign on the streets of the Cuban capital that the kind of fervour seen on previous papal visits to the world's most Catholic region is about to break out.

There is the odd billboard offering a *bienvenida* to John Paul II and a scattering of posters on private homes, but the true effect of Mr Castro's appeal for a big turnout in this officially atheist country remains to be seen.

Yesterday the Pope asked

pilgrims and tourists at the Vatican to keep his trip in their prayers. "With your prayers, I hope that I can go to Cuba and come back," he joked to the crowd.

In a television address lasting into the early hours of Saturday, Mr Castro assured viewers he would be attending the final mass in Havana next Sunday.

"We should give [the Pope] a great welcome from the moment he lands at the airport," he said, adding that he expected "the whole people, Catholic and non-Catholic, believers and non-believers", to take part.

Until recent weeks, the historic papal visit had received little publicity in the government-controlled media. In a country where to

be a practising Catholic was until recently considered counter-revolutionary, the official change of heart is difficult to absorb.

But it is clear that Mr Castro — who is counting on the Pope to reiterate the Vatican's opposition to the United States trade embargo against Cuba — wants to avoid a repetition of scenes of almost 20 years ago in Nicaragua. Then, a pro-Sandinista crowd chanted slogans during a papal address.

During his television appearance — which purported to be a press conference but was a five-hour monologue — Mr Castro asked those attending this week's open-air masses not to protest at anything the Pope says.



Vatican names prelates

John Hooper in Rome

THE Pope named 22 new cardinals yesterday, amid speculation that one could be his successor.

With one exception — Pope John XXIII — no one over the age of 67 has been elected pontiff this century. The present Pope was 58 when chosen.

The current college of cardinals is abnormally weighted with older prelates, and so the infusion of younger blood could be significant. Among the new cardinals, two in particular are regarded as *papabili*, or possible contenders.

One is the multilingual archbishop of Vienna, Christoph Schoenborn, aged 53, who has been mentioned as a possible successor to Joseph Ratzinger, the Vatican's theological watchdog. The other is the archbishop of Genoa, Dionigi Tettamanzi.

The new intake will receive their red hats amid much pomp and ceremony in a service known as a consistory on February 22.

Two, however, will be missing. The Pope said yesterday that he was invoking a rarely used procedure to keep secret the identity of two new cardinals. Their names will be guarded by the pontiff in *pectore* (literally, "in breast").

The procedure has previously been invoked to protect church leaders operating in countries where they or their work could be put at risk by publicity surrounding their elevation. There was speculation the Pope may have chosen two Chinese cardinals.

Concern at the Pope's deteriorating health has made the composition of the college of cardinals increasingly important. Not all members can vote in the election of a pontiff. Pope Paul VI laid down that "cardinal-electors" must be below the age of 80, and he limited their number to 120.

Pope John Paul yesterday ignored that rule, expanding the list of electors to 123. Though presented as a temporary expedient, intended to honour deserving candidates, the decision underlined the Pope's determination to select as many of the men who will choose his successor as possible. He has now named almost 90 per cent of the electors.



A copper statue, cast 4,300 years ago for Pharaoh Pepi I, goes on display at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo for the first time yesterday. The restoration has taken 16 months. It was discovered inside a life-size statue of Pepi I in 1889 at a site 400 miles south of the capital. Work on the bigger statue is due to finish next year. PHOTOGRAPH: ALADIN ABDEL NABY

Russian miners die in blast

FOUR miners were killed and 23 others feared dead after a powerful explosion 3,000ft below the surface in the Russian Arctic yesterday. A spokesman for the emergency services in the town of Vorkuta said rescue teams were breaking through rubble to save trapped miners. He added that 22 miners had survived the explosion. — *Reuters, Moscow.*

Thousands flee diamond town

THOUSANDS of people have fled the diamond town of Tongoil in Sierra Leone after it was captured from government forces by Kamajor fighters loyal to the ousted president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, relief agency officials said yesterday.

The traditional hunters took the town, a key source of government revenue, on Saturday after a two-week siege.

These fleeing were heading towards Kenema, the eastern capital about 12 miles away, a local co-ordinator with the International Committee of the Red Cross said. — *Reuters, Freetown.*

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Marseillais sing of jobs revolt

Jon Henley in Marseille

THEY are the inheritors of a long tradition, the marchers on the streets of this turbulent Mediterranean city. In Marseille, if you are not happy, you get up and do something about it.

More than 200 years ago, a battalion of Marseillais revolutionaries marched all the way to Paris to help overthrow the monarchy, singing the rousing call to arms that became France's national anthem.

This weekend it was the turn of Jean-Pierre Marcell, and a few thousand fellow demonstrators, singing an equally stirring song — "Stay motivated" — that has become the anthem of France's escalating jobless movement.

If unlikely to unsettle the left-

wing coalition government, it has at least badly shaken and divided it — to the point where Lionel Jospin, the Socialist prime minister, has pledged to address the nation on television this week.

"There is misery here, real misery, and Paris had better realise it," said Mr Marcell, who is married with three children and lives on government handouts of £270 a month. "Here, we'll keep fighting for what we need and deserve — there's nothing else we can do."

Marseille was the birthplace of the now countrywide campaign by France's 3.1 million unemployed for higher benefits and jobs. Mr Marcell was among local protesters who occupied unemployment benefit offices in the city six weeks ago.

The movement shows no sign of abating. On Saturday, its third national day of action, tens of thousands of the unemployed and their supporters staged some of the largest demonstrations yet in about 20 towns.

Some 15,000 took to the streets in Paris, where a small group of protesters succeeded in being served a free meal of oysters and steak at the famous La Coupole restaurant. A customer offered a bottle of champagne.

Five thousand more demonstrated in Toulouse and 3,000 in Montpellier, while large crowds gathered in other towns including Lille, Rouen, Bordeaux and Grenoble.

It is no accident that the movement started in Marseille. The port city, a riotous melting pot, has a proud, radical tradition dating from before the revolution. During the second world war it was a crucible of the resistance.

Since then it has lost much of its heavy industry, leaving one in five of the workforce without a job. Another 128,000 jobs have gone since 1982 with the decline of the port. The unions are strong and well organised, and strikes, like the nearly two-month public transport stoppage in 1996, are often bitter.

Several of the northern boroughs have long been staunchly Communist; in out-

lying towns like La Ciotat, where the first jobless union was formed seven years ago, the local council is invariably either a Socialist or a Communist list. Marseille city hall, however, fell to the right in 1995 for the first time in a quarter-century.

"Here, Paris represents the power and the elite, the soulless technocrats," said Marcel Carasso, the regional organiser of the Communist-led CGT union. "They don't understand us and we don't trust them. Pride, dignity, struggle, rebellion — that's Marseille."

Carrying banners that read "Unemployed is not my profession" and "Together, united, we will overcome", Marseille's jobless protesters marched, sang and danced under bright blue skies this weekend to the regional government building, where they were halted by a double row of barricades and four busloads of riot police.

"I remember a time when there was so much work you'd get called out to the yards in the middle of the night," said Georges Barré, a retired ship repairer.

"Now no one will invest in jobs; they take a 25 per cent profit off the stock exchange instead. But Marseille is a little bit special — here the pride of La Marseillaise will keep us strong."

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TheGuardian INTERACTIVE

British minister calls for candour from Algeria

Ian Black In Algiers

A LGERIA is sticking firmly to its position that a European Union mission can only hold talks about "combating terrorism" which do not constitute interference in its internal affairs.

But Derek Fatchett, the Foreign Office minister, insisted yesterday there was "a need for candour" about the recent massacres in the country. "That's not pointing the finger at anybody in the Algerian government for responsibility," he said in a BBC radio interview. "But it would help their case — it would help all of us — if we had a very clear statement and a clear understanding of the cause of these events, who's responsible for them."

After another weekend of killings, and a rare report of a military success against Islamist insurgents, Algerian government officials said the meeting with the European

Union delegation which arrives today would be no more than the continuation of a political dialogue between the two sides.

Mr Fatchett and ministers from Luxembourg and Austria are expected to meet the Algerian foreign minister, Ahmed Attaf, to express concern about violence that has claimed more than 1,000 lives since December 30.

British diplomats said last night the talks would be followed by meetings with newspaper editors and opposition party leaders.

The Algerian government, shaken by the scale of the killings, agreed to the EU mission last week. But it is approaching the talks *grudgingly, insisting* Europe must crack down on Islamist militants abroad and leave it to fight terror as it sees fit.

In the latest violence, 26 people were reported killed in two days, south of Algiers, 18 of them stopped at a road block set up by militants disguised as police. But army troops were



Mourners in Sida Hammad yesterday bury a victim of the massacre a week ago in which the government says 103 villagers were killed by Islamists. Newspapers said the toll was 400.

reported to have destroyed a base of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in the western province of Relizane, according to *la Tribune* news-

paper. The paper said troops also attacked terrorists in the mountainous Bongara area and found three young women who

had been kidnapped from Sida Hammad, south of the capital. All had had their throats cut.

On Saturday the Amer-

United States ambassador, Cameron Hume, visited Sida Hammad to question villagers about the attack by militants last Sunday, in

which 103 people were killed and 70 injured, according to the authorities. But press reports said only a few villagers had

been authorised to answer Mr Hume's questions — again raising doubts about the accuracy of official accounts of attacks.

Saddam vows to launch million-strong militia

Julian Borger
Middle East Correspondent

IRAQ declared a holy war on international sanctions yesterday, backed by a million-strong militia, in defiance of attempts, led by the United States, to force it to comply with United Nations weapons inspections.

After the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, issued a call to arms on Saturday night during a television address marking the seventh anniversary of the Gulf war, his vice-president, Taha Yassin Ramadan, announced that a million men and women "volunteers" would be given weapons training starting next month.

"We are determined [to carry out] a great *jihad* to lift the sanctions," Mr Ramadan was quoted as saying by the Iraqi News Agency. "There is no alternative to this after seven years of patience and co-operation with the UN and its committees."

He did not say how this force would counter the UN sanctions, imposed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Western governments insist that the embargo can be lifted only once UN weapons inspectors confirm that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have been dismantled.

Earlier this month, Iraq blocked a UN special commission (Unscom) inspection team led by a US Gulf war veteran whom it accused of being a spy. Unscom withdrew the team on Friday, and the chief weapons inspector, Richard Butler, is due for talks in Baghdad today in an attempt to cajole Iraqi compliance and defuse the crisis.

In his anniversary speech, President Saddam said: "The Americans are continuing to harm our people, which requires a new method of response". He called for the "mobilisation and training of a key unit of volunteer forces — assembled out of conviction and not through orders".

There is a volunteer force known as "Saddam's commandos" which held a recruitment drive in November during an earlier standoff with the US. It was not clear whether the new militia would be a separate force.

The mobilisation represents a serious escalation in the war of words with Washington and London, which has accompanied a steady build-up of forces in the Gulf. On Friday Britain announced it was sending the aircraft-carrier HMS *Invincible* to the

The Defence Secretary, George Robertson, dismissed the Iraqi rhetoric as "bluster". He told the BBC: "I think we are likely to hear a lot of noise but hopefully a diplomatic solution will be found."

The US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, said President Saddam was "tightening the noose around himself" by blocking the UNSCOM team which "must have been close to something".

Julian Borger
Middle East Correspondent

S EVEN Iraqis were murdered at the start of a dinner party on Saturday night in Jordan's capital Amman in what Jordanian officials described as a mafia-style execution. The dead included a senior embassy official and two wealthy businessmen.

The killings provoked outrage from Baghdad, which sent diplomats and security officials to investigate.

officials to investigate.

Jordanian officials said the attack could have been the bloody denouement of a vicious struggle between powerful Iraqis for control of a lucrative trade in breaking sanctions.

The murdered diplomat, Hikmet al-Hajoui, was the number two at the Iraqi embassy. Iraqi opposition sources said yesterday that he had been Baghdad's top spy in Jordan.



His wife was also killed along with five other Iraqis and an Egyptian. They were hacked to death with knives after their hands had been bound and their mouths taped. A doctor at the El-Bashir hospital said three victims had had their throats cut.

Hikmet al-Hajou (left) was among seven Iraqis murdered in Amman.

The number two at the embassy there, he was also Baghdad's top spy in Jordan, according to Iraqi opposition sources. Iraq has sent diplomats to investigate but Jordanian officials say the attack could be part of a struggle to control the lucrative trade in breaking sanctions

The only survivor, a Greek woman whose condition was described as critical, reportedly told police there had been four or five killers who spoke Arabic with Iraqi accents.

The murders took place in the mansion of Sami George,

a rich Iraqi Christian who was among the dead. The Greek woman was his girlfriend.

Also reported murdered were Nemir Awji, part of another powerful Iraqi business family currently building a hotel and shopping complex in the capital, an Iraqi Kurd called Kaka Sadeq and two of George's employees, an Egyptian and an Iraqi.

An activist for the opposition Iraqi National Congress in London said: "Our sense is that this is feuding inside the regime, probably to do with money."

George's business dealings had been linked to powerful figures in the Iraqi regime, in particular Barzan Tikriti

President Saddam Hussein's half-brother and the former intelligence chief, who is currently ambassador to Geneva.

Opposition sources said al-Hajou had formerly been one of Mr Tikriti's senior lieutenants in intelligence.

A Jordanian palace official said several Iraqi suspects are

attempt two weeks ago on another Iraqi diplomat. Rahim Taher, had given evidence pointing to an inter-clan feud over money.

An official Iraqi government statement described the killings as a "heinous crime".

Relations between Iraq and Jordan soured last month after the execution in Baghdad of four Jordanians suspected of smuggling car parts worth \$500.

But Jordan's prime minister, Abdul Salam al-Majali, rejected suggestions the attack was in revenge. "It has no link with that," he said.

In a separate development, Iraq said yesterday it would release all Jordanian prisoners and halt proceedings against Jordanians in its courts. The Iraqi News Agency said President Saddam ordered the releases after meeting a leading Jordanian opposition figure, Leith Shubeilat.

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The best way to help the poor

Benefits are better than tax cuts

ONCE upon a time a young charismatic politician announced he was going to transform the welfare state. His radical speeches were widely reported and prompted a national debate. He set out a specific goal — ending the dependency culture — and devised a specific strategy for achieving his goal: increasing work incentives, targeting resources on the poor, and simplifying the benefits system. Then it blew up in his face and he was never heard of again. No, not Tony Blair but John Moore, the Conservative Social Services Secretary in 1988. Tony Blair is a far more substantial figure than the hapless John Moore but there are still lessons he can draw from Moore's demise. First and foremost, at the start of his national welfare reform roadshow is the need to beware of raising undue expectations. When, finally, the once charismatic Moore unveiled his plans 10 years ago there was derision on the Opposition benches and, even more ominously, silence from his own backbenchers. Moore fell because his extravagant and ambitious claims were unfulfillable.

One minister who did watch and learn was Peter Lilley, a far more effective administrator than political reporters ever recognised. Like Moore, Lilley was determined to restructure the welfare state but on the lines of Nigel Lawson's radical tax changes: no single bang but a series of "adjustments" over four or five budgets. Frank Field, Labour's minister for welfare reform, has reached the same conclusion. He has been saying for some time that a big bang must be avoided. All ministers now seem agreed that evolution is the way. So where should the Prime Minister move now?

He first needs to clarify his government's objectives. Does he, as he implied in his interview with Hugo Young in Saturday's Guardian, want to create a benefits system which ceases to be universal and becomes a safety net for the needy instead? If he does, then he should allow the basic state pension to be gradually withdrawn from people with high occupational pensions under Labour's so-called affluence test. Yet ministerial support for this most basic proposal has been switched off and on at least three times in the last week.

Much confusion would be avoided if the Prime Minister would separate the Government's long-term restructuring goals from its short and medium-term needs. Restructuring offers an opportunity for many overdue reforms to national insurance, second pensions and long-term nursing care. National insurance is now recognised by many people as a tax by another name. It pays for less than half of all benefits. No longer financing the unemployed beyond six months or the sick at all, Labour would be right to pursue compulsory second pensions and compulsory long-term nursing, insurance for all people aged 35 or under. There are still 14 per cent of men and 23 per cent of women in full-time work without an occupational or personal pension. All three changes should be tied together with the ceiling on national insurance contributions abolished as people's benefits become tied to their level of contributions.

Long-term utopias are easy compared to short and medium-term reforms. Wickedness raises its head at the very first hurdle. Tony Blair insists the poor need a better deal but refuses to raise income tax to pay for it. The only alternative is affluence testing — the gradual withdrawal of basic benefits (state basic pension, child benefit, maternity pay) from the better off. Powerful arguments can be made against every affluence test: the importance of national solidarity, strengthening common ground, promoting mutual regard. Two decades ago these arguments would have been persuasive but in reality, the middle classes have already abandoned basic benefits. The key to withdrawing these benefits from the affluent is to ensure there is a direct transfer from the better-off to the poor: £30,000-a-year occupational pensioners giving up their extra £3,000 state benefit so that the two million poorest pensioners can be guaranteed a minimum income; better-off parents with children in the sixth form giving up their child benefits so that poor families can be given education maintenance allowances to keep their children in education.

There is one further front which the Prime Minister must address: the temptation to go for the politically easy tax cut rather than the more effective in-work benefit. Gordon Brown talks about introducing an American style working family tax credit but we already have an effective family credit benefit. The employers don't want the burden, and the Inland Revenue has no experience of administering such a system. Similarly, the Chancellor talks of helping the poor with a 10p starting rate for income tax. Raising the tax threshold would be a much better way of giving them help. Finally, ministers should remember the Lilley strategy but if they are serious about helping the poor, their series of "adjustments" will be increases to benefits, not cuts. A succession of studies has shown benefits falling well below basic necessities.

NHS party poopers

Bupa should be signed off forthwith

STAND by for a big party. The National Health Service is 50 in July. All manner of celebrations are being planned including the biggest international health conference ever held in Britain. Over 4,000 delegates will attend to pay tribute to Labour's finest triumph: the creation of the NHS by Aneurin Bevan in the face of fierce opposition from the British Medical Association and the Conservative Party. Labour is intent on milking the anniversary for every ounce of political credit. And why not? The NHS became the most popular institution in Britain, more popular than the royal family in the days when the royal family was popular. Even Margaret Thatcher resisted tampering with its collectivist principle: free access to health care, available to all, according to need.

Sensibly, the NHS is not just looking back but looking ahead to the challenge of the next 50 years. The theme for the 50th conference is healthcare 2020. There is only one small problem with this plan: Bupa, the leading private health insurer has been invited to sponsor this future review. What sort of credibility can the review have with such a sponsor? Has the NHS Executive forgotten the way an earlier 1995 review, Healthcare 2000, was dismissed because of its Bupa links. It should find an independent sponsor.

Temper temper...



Letters to the Editor

How safe is Blair's safety net?

HUGO Young's interview with Tony Blair (The Week, January 17) reminded me that, in his autobiography, the philosopher R.G. Collingwood remarked upon the dense atmosphere of concealment in which the 1930s "National" government wrapped its policies, beginning with the entry into office of Ramsay MacDonald, who seemed to say so much and never said anything at all; and going on with the "con-man" methods of Stanley Baldwin, who seldom said anything except what an honest man he was and how completely every one could trust him. What's new about New Labour is that it gives us both of these prime ministers for the price of one.

Anthony Wright,
120 Melrose Avenue,
London NW2 4JX.

SO TONY Blair "speaks for a system that must slowly cease to be a universal pro-

vider, and become essentially a safety net". It says a great deal about this man that, even after two decades of unrelenting attacks on the very basis of the welfare state, he still considers the latter to be a "universal provider". One shudders to think what state it will be in once it has been reduced to meet Mr Blair's objective.

Walter Cairns,
836 Wilmslow Road,
Manchester M20 8RP.

TONY Blair "counts the National Health Service and the education system as part of the welfare state". But the belief that "the welfare state... should help people when they are needy... their concept of welfare is the relief of poverty and the help of people in need" is one he ascribes to people in general and approves himself.

So if he means what he says, public school Tony's "big picture" is that the

health service and state education are to be restricted to the needy and the rest of us will have to go private.

Anthony Matthews,
83 Clarendon Park Road,
Leicester LE2 3AH.

TONY Blair seems to ignore the fact that the fears of benefit recipients are not simply based on "scare stories" leaked to the Guardian. I'm not entirely sure how, having already announced the cut in single parent benefits, he expects us all to believe in his assertion that he would never harm a "single needy person". The "rumours" spring from the undeniable fact of the cut already announced, which harms one of the most needy and impoverished groups in our society (and which can hardly be described as an encouragement to those on the present level of benefit to look for work) and from the obsti-

nate refusal of the Government to listen to any protests at its decision. Under these circumstances, how can we sit and wait passively for Mr Blair to "fill the void" and tell us, sometime later in the year, what has been decided for us? The Guardian has my full support in its criticism of what has already been done, in warning us of what may be in the pipeline, and reminding Mr Blair and the rest of New Labour that they do not have a monopoly on correct solutions to our most difficult social problems.

Sharon Howard,
125 Pentre Jane Morgan,
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion.

TONY Blair says "Trust us on welfare". Was it Emerson who said "The louder he talked of his honour, the faster we counted the spoons?"

Alan Evans,
17 Broom Close,
Teddington, Middx TW11 3RJ.

YOUR correspondence (Letters, January 17) have been less than fair to the chairman of the Royal Opera. How would they like to find themselves at, say, a performance of Idomeneo, sitting next to a snoring fat-cat who stank of cigar smoke and would much rather have been at a decent wrestling match — or perhaps one of the less demanding works of Andrew Lloyd Webber — but felt it his duty not to forego so prestigious a freebie?

Philip Barlow,
67 Monument Lane, Rednal,
Birmingham B45 9QJ.

YOUR correspondence reminds me of my experience at the Ritz Hotel last summer. Having been asked to breakfast, I was refused entry to the dining room because, although I was wearing a (new) pair of white trainers, I sent for the manager and told him that: a) only two men had built private opera houses this century; b) that he stood before the second; and c) both buildings were white tennis shoes.

With a flourish the manager swept me into the dining room. Martin Graham,
Longborough Festival Opera,
Moreton-in-Marsh,
Gloucestershire GL56 0QF

Gulf partners

MARTIN Woolcott, supporter of military action against Iraq (Dangerous states, January 17) provided that the US instigates a change of government in Israel. That may help to ease Israeli-Palestinian relations, but it is unlikely to bring about stability in the region.

To do that, the West must, instead of inflicting collective punishment on Iraqi citizens through economic sanctions, find a long-term solution to the Gulf crisis. One way of doing this might be to cultivate the emergence of a regional partnership made up of democratic allies such as Turkey and Israel. The Israeli-Turkish military alliance, which has been expanding since 1996, could enhance the region's stability by serving a powerful military deterrent against Iraq or any other would-be adversary.

Turkey and Israel may not be ideal democratic countries, but they are preferable to autocratic and authoritarian states such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, etc. upon whom the West has so far been relying for stability in the region.

Randhir Singh Bains
34 Shere Road,
Gants Hill, Essex IG2 6TG.



Hamming it up with a burger

HAVE never worked with Stephen Berkoff (Drama in one act, anger as Berkoff takes the burger shilling, January 13) and I probably never will. However, if he called me up today and asked me to, I would. I'm a poor actress. I've hardly worked and earn a pittance. I simply can't believe that these heavyweights of the theatre are playing such stupid power games. It has opened my eyes to the reality of the profession to know that Berkoff takes a job because he "needs the money". This is a perfect example of how underfunded theatre is, and how badly paid work in theatre is for actors. That's why Berkoff needs to do McDonald's commercials and why the payment should remain high. But

no, instead they wildly stab each other in the back. It's so sickening to watch, so sad. Please can I play the girl who serves Berkoff his burger? I'd do it just to work opposite him and for the price of a burger and fries! Oops, I've hardly worked and now I suppose I never will again.

Jacquiann Corv,
32 Victoria Road,
Manchester M14 6BW

WHILE I accept that strike-breaking is a serious matter, is not one in the acting and voice-over community concerned about how companies such as McDonald's treat their non-acting staff?

James Mackenzie,
7 Kincapple, Fife, KY16 9SH.

Plimsoll line

YOUR correspondence (Letters, January 17) have been less than fair to the chairman of the Royal Opera. How would they like to find themselves at, say, a performance of Idomeneo, sitting next to a snoring fat-cat who stank of cigar smoke and would much rather have been at a decent wrestling match — or perhaps one of the less demanding works of Andrew Lloyd Webber — but felt it his duty not to forego so prestigious a freebie?

Philip Barlow,
67 Monument Lane, Rednal,
Birmingham B45 9QJ.

YOUR correspondence reminds me of my experience at the Ritz Hotel last summer. Having been asked to breakfast, I was refused entry to the dining room because, although I was wearing a (new) pair of white trainers, I sent for the manager and told him that: a) only two men had built private opera houses this century; b) that he stood before the second; and c) both buildings were white tennis shoes.

With a flourish the manager swept me into the dining room. Martin Graham,
Longborough Festival Opera,
Moreton-in-Marsh,
Gloucestershire GL56 0QF

Don't sell tickets, just let Diana rest in peace

Endpiece

Roy Hattersley

WHATEVER else may be said about Earl Spencer, no one can doubt the contribution which he has made to the study of the effects of childhood environment on conduct and character. Thanks to him, we can be absolutely certain that it is possible to be brought up surrounded by great pictures, historic furniture and noble architecture and still retain the aesthetic instincts of a deathwatch beetle. By building at Althorp what we shall, no doubt, soon be calling The Diana Experience, he is creating more than a memorial to his dead sister. He is commemorating the defining vulgarities of the 20th century's closing years.

We can rely on it all being tastefully done — even though some of the architect's drawings suggest that part of the mausoleum will be reminiscent of a shopping arcade. Taste of a sort is essential to the initiative's success. But that no more justifies the scale and nature of the enterprise

than the promise to give away the profits turns it from a cheese park into a shrine. There are some things for which tickets should not be sold. And the grave of a young woman who died in a car crash is one of them. If it is impossible to accommodate the coach parties without charging an entrance fee, Diana, Princess of Wales, should be left to rest in private peace.

Perhaps the Princess herself — who was not averse to the right sort of publicity — would have loved the queues at the gate. But let us hope that that is not the side of her character which Earl Spencer wishes to commemorate. No doubt she would have been delighted to know that, after the costs of the burial site are paid, ticket money will be donated to charity. Let us also assume, for a brief moment, that the same rule will be applied to the income from visitors to Althorp House — though there must be a terrible temptation to use the celebrated grave as the loss leader in the stately super-market. Then then — even if the whole business is financed by the Spencer fortune — it will be tainted by the commercial ethic. The curse of our time is the belief that everything — health,

popularity, happiness and even youth — can be bought and sold. Earl Spencer is proposing to sell the memory of the Princess of Wales.

He is also perpetuating the idea of celebrity death — a notion hideously illustrated by the BBC on the morning of the tragedy when, after a chorale to the Princess and the brief biography of Dodi Fayed, the newscaster added as an afterthought: "the driver also died". No doubt the Althorp mausoleum will pay proper tribute to Princess Diana's good works. But in spirit — as the telephone bookings come in and the credit card numbers are carefully checked — it will not be the campaign against landmines, the work for the poor or the identification with the homeless which make the title ring. It will be the designer dresses, the fashionable health clubs, the exotic holidays and all the other attributes and activities which add up to the loathsome word glamour. Although I barely met her, and suspect that we had little in common, I regret that Princess Diana's life should be treated with so little respect.

I admit to holding an austere view of death. It has always seemed to me that osten-

tations grief and conspicuous mourning is less a tribute to the dead departed than a cry for recognition from the bereaved. When Laertes jumped into his sister's grave, Hamlet jumped in after him to show that he loved Ophelia more than 40,000 brothers would find possible. Exhibitionism, I suggested to my teacher more than 40 years ago. Self-indulgence, he replied. Hamlet could have felt without showing his feelings. The anguish,

I wish that Earl Spencer had chosen simple dignity for his sister

when we lose somebody we love, is far too personal an emotion decently to become public property. Some people cannot hold back the tears. Earl Spencer, on the other hand, did not have to read his polemic from the Westminster Abbey pulpit. Funeral services are no place for philippics — unless like Mark Antony you have a vested interest in perpetuating one

What those lazy parents need is a good dose of hard work

THE attempt to tackle social delinquency by targeting "lazy parents" is only a surface solution in the wider picture affecting family life (Labour targets lazy parents, January 16). It is important to establish why parenting seems to be such a problem in our society at present.

Family life does not exist in a social vacuum and parenting cannot be isolated from the many social, economic and environmental influences to which families are exposed. There are many social pressures which contribute to poor parenting skills, such as unemployment and poverty.

I have worked with many parents who may exhibit poor parenting skills not because of laziness, a lack of desire to be good parents or a lack of love for their children, but due to other circumstances which have contributed to the pressures on their family life.

A great deal is said about the responsibilities of the family, but little mentioned of the responsibilities of the Government and the wider community. What parents need is to be able to care for their children in homes where there is an adequate income, a comfortable environment and prospective employment opportunities.

This puts responsibility on the Government to introduce policies that make effective changes to improve social inclusion and make parenting easier. Diane Hall,
21 Hayburn Crescent,
Glasgow G11 5AY.

SURELY the laziest parents are those that pack their children off to boarding school at the tender age of seven or eight, see them now and again in the holidays until they are practically grown up, then send them off to university where eventually the child emerges as a fully-fledged, balanced, educated, morally righteous adult who can then take its rightful place in government and tell the rest of us what to do.

Ann Barratt,
4 Matham Grove,
London SE22 8PN.

A Country Diary

THE LAKE DISTRICT: The primroses, bluebells and anemones will soon be sprouting in the little wood near Woodland Church — reason enough for a return visit to an unspoiled corner remembered from younger days. As boys we used to explore the Drumardale and Coniston fells from Woodland railway station, but the line was dismantled many years ago. Nowadays, I usually approach the lovely heathery moorlands of Woodland Fell from the unfenced road that winds round the lower slopes of Burnes from the Gawthwaite Moor road. Here a round of modest summits, flanked by the walk through the wood, gives you superb, close-up views of the Coniston fells, the full length of the lake and much of Morecambe bay and its estuaries. More than 70 years ago I remember cycling from my home in Barrow-in-Furness just to bathe in Beacon Tarn. Afterwards I climbed Beacon Fell, one of the summits on the Woodland round, and had my first view

of Dow Crag which, a few years later, I was to come to know, from weekly climbing visits, more intimately than any other corner of the fells. You can enter this unspoiled area from the main road two miles south of Torver, but my most recent visit was from Woodland, collecting Yew Bank, with its prominent cairn, and Wool Knott, before rounding the turn and walking up Beacon Fell for the view I had first enjoyed in 1926. It was all exactly as I remembered — the familiar shapes of Brown Pike, Dow Crag, the Old Man and Weatherall, lit by the morning sun and looking in the clear, frosty air, little more than a stone's throw away. Seventy-two years ago, out of sheer exuberance, I had built a cairn on the lower summit of Top o' Sealside, around the toe of the lake — my first and only summit cairn. This time I just walked back through the primrose wood, happy that the area is exactly as I remembered it.

A HARRY GRIFFIN

Havana diary

Peter Hillmore

THE FATHER of the Se-crets was most helpful. He could cure the paralysis in my right side, but it might take seven days for me to feel the full effect. All it would require, said the "Babalaw", was a seven-hour service of chanting, dancing and drums, designed to call up the relevant saints who could cure me. There would also be a diet of herbs and a programme of sustained chanting. And a fee of \$300.

The consultation took place in the babalaw's house, because Santería is derived from voodoo and there could be no places of public worship for a religion brought in secret by slaves from Africa, even if it is no longer covert in Cuba.

The babalaw then gave me advice, for he is reputed to see into the past and the future. He is one of Cuba's most famous practitioners of Santería, whose beliefs accept he can cross into the netherworld at will.

His predictions were a weird mixture of Patience Strong and Nostradamus, intermingled with Mystic Meg. And no one laughed, for nearly everyone, Fidel Castro included, is reputed to believe, to some degree, in Santería, the Way of the Saints.

The young interpreter, educated as a mechanical engineer, had spent all his life in the officially secular Cuba with free medical service, and had never set foot inside Havana's cathedral. But when he felt ill recently he sought the help of a Santería (cheaper than a babalaw).

The Santería religion is big on portent, and one prediction made at the new year ceremony was that: "No hat can be bigger than a crown." Any other new year, this could be interpreted as a platitude along the lines of: "He digs deeper who deepest digs." But, with the Pope arriving on Wednesday, this is open to myriad interpretations and divining of the herbal tea leaves.

Belief is everywhere. When you open a new bottle of rum in Cuba, you always pour some on to the ground. Not much, mind you, as you often have to pay for bottles of rum with dollars, and dollars are rare — but just enough "for the saints".

FOR THE official atheist population of Cuba, it is merely a superstition. But unofficially, it is a symbol signifying a primitive belief in either Catholic or voodoo saints. Or both, for they are frequently the same.

The centre point of the Pope's visit to Cuba will be Saturday's trip to Santiago de Cuba for the coronation of the Virgen de la Caridad (Our Lady of Charity), the wooden image found floating in the Atlantic by three fishermen in 1606, with a helpful note attached to it saying "I am the Virgin de la Caridad". It is the most sacred Catholic relic in Cuba.

The relic is also one of the most sacred saints in the Santería canon, and the Virgen is associated with Ochun, the Yoruba goddess of love. A copy of the relic stood prominently in the babalaw's shrine. The part of his living room he called his power base.

The replica was next to a primitive sculpture of an African warrior, and scattered about were coloured stones draped with shiny necklaces. These stones are believed to contain the spirits of both the saints and the Yoruba gods of distant Africa.

The babalaw was at pains to point out as many parallels as he could with Catholicism: "We too have a father, a Pope. He is called life and lives in Nigeria."

A Santería ceremony itself is something of an anticlimax — especially as it also takes place in a private house. As drums summon up the saints, a makeshift "altar" is erected in the front room with a variety of offerings, including an iced cake.

There is a lot of singing and dancing and, curiously, a lot of coming and goings, with people greeting each other and passing the time of day. Most people chant in African languages, and a few people speak in tongues as the saints possess their bodies. The babalaw moves around cajoling, joshing and subtly directing the proceedings.

Still no feeling on my right side, though.

Nice to stab you, to stab you nice

Commentary

Peter Preston

AN OLD, true friend came calling the other day: a corporal in the New Labour Army, elected for the first time to a London borough council seat four years ago as Blair's legions prepared to roll. "I don't understand it," he said, "I thought we were supposed to be the nice, con-mitified party. But there are some really nasty people when you get on the inside. They just seem to enjoy fighting for their own sake."

Sweet, sour, nice, nasty. It was all, on the surface, no more than the neophyte politicians' familiar disillusionment with backstage life in Committee Room B — Our Friends in the North (or South) and an ingrained taste of backstabbing folk. If you sat in the front stalls long enough, you wouldn't be remotely surprised. Galskell, Wilson, Foot, Kinnock? Nice to stab you, to stab you nice. And yet through those

years, though you knew the brothers came from a chronically dysfunctional family, there was always a veneer of idealism to their snarlings. They were fighting to save the bit of The Party they loved. George Brown was never intended to love Harold Wilson: or, for heaven's sake, vice versa. Tony Benn was an object of loathing because of what he said, not because of his scrubbed schoolboy way of saying it.

The thesis, to be sure, got a little threadbare at the point where Dick Crossman and Tony Crosland intersected, but even there it was still possible to believe that policy and principle were driving forces. In a movement of ideas, such failings could be both expected and excused. No broad church could survive without them.

My council mate isn't naive. He knows his history — or at least this version of history. He expected intense debate, about plans and projects; he accepted there would always be arguments about ways and means of delivering promises.

"But that's got nothing to do with it. This is just about getting power and hanging on to it, and it's all personal."

By these lights, there may be something about the squabbles that already bring old friends to the smooth brows of New Labour. For where, so

far, has the trouble lain? In a Scottish suicide devoid of an ideological content — fuelled rather by bitterness and lonely despair and malice. In the chronic failure of councils like Hackney to deliver a decent education from a chamber obsessed by peculiar passions. In fires and foul-ups.

At root, the problems here have nothing to do with intellectual ferment. They are the problems of people who can't stand the people they're supposed to work with. Little things: the way they scratch their head, the way they blow their nose. Like some last knockings of a family Christmas from hell. And where, as is mostly the case, no traditional political enemy out there is worth worrying about — not the Liberals scenting a PR deal, not the Tories groping for a life-jacket — then people, with their runny noses and scratched heads, are the only enemies in town.

It remains just possible, of course, to argue the alternative: to see the rows which begin to wash through this government as still intrinsic ideological. The entire welfare ruckus can be tolerably interpreted thus: the ruminations of traditional socialism against Thatcherism with a human, boyish grin. But that — as Gordon Brown and non-friends may shortly affirm — is only half the story.

Test questions. Is Harriet Harman more hated by the brothers and sisters today than she was a year ago when she espoused diametrically opposite views on single mothers? No, the Hating of Harriet has always been a river in full flood, waiting to break its banks. Do those who gripe about Peter Mandelson fall neatly into left or right wings? No, anyone can moan about Mandelson. Ideology has no more to do with it than it has when Donald Dewar and Derry Irvine scowl at each other across a crowded room. This is personal.

It is also the seam to mine in the deep shafts where Tony swings side by side with Gordon. They were firm friends. Perhaps they still are. Mr Brown was laughing and slapping his knees in full view at Prime Minister's Question Time last week, demonstrative supportiveness as usual. The personal.

Mr Blair shows no sign of parcel-passing. Thus is ambition blocked

Two may disagree over particular issues or because their roles provoke debate, but there's nothing fundamental which divides them surely, twin architects of the same project? Or is there? You shouldn't conflate ultimate drama out of the minutiae of that biography of the Chancellor, authorised or not: nor from the various spins of their tame doctors. Gordon Brown is privately warmer than he can appear in public, Tony Blair perhaps a degree or two chillier. This isn't a disaster area, yet.

But there are some structural instabilities — of which the greatest is wondering what Gordon does next. For the moment (as William Rees-Mogg observes) he is almost the company chief executive to Blair's chairman of the board. But that can't run for two electoral terms. No chancellor can expect to last that long or would want to. And what thereafter is there for him to do? Not deputy PM, with all the fluff and medals. He brings nothing by way of party unity to the slot. Not foreign secretary, a job which currently diminishes with Robin Cook's fortunes. Not, in the name of survival, home secretary.

Some heavyweights of old, of course, were content to serve their time in the great offices of state and wait for opportunity to knock. It knocked for Jim Callaghan, but not for Denis Healey. Neither of them, though, had the togetherness of Blair and Brown. These men were equals. They divided the spoils. But what happens to the holder of the lesser, frailer portion? Some democracies have an easier, fixed-term answer. Bill Clinton will try to deliver for Al Gore. There's a parcel to pass along. Mr Blair, however, shows no sign of parcel-passing. Why should he while his husband's moderating mission. The next minute it's Ms Booth fighting for justice for all kinds of awkward cases, often on collision course with the Blairite Reformation. Today Ms Booth leads the opposition in a case about part-time workers' pension rights. The Daily Telegraph deemed her involvement "both embarrassing and ironic". It appears to conflict with the key government aim of reducing welfare dependency.

Since May 1, Ms Booth has fought a string of cases where she has clashed with key New Labour beliefs. In September, she locked horns with the Education Secretary, representing a schoolgirl who had been excluded after her father was convicted of assaulting the school's headmaster. Then came the lesbian lovers, where Booth won a case opening up equal rights to gay partners, a decision the Daily Mail described as "politically correct" with "massive implications for employment rights, pensions, and social security which could cost the taxpayer millions." In October, it was another potentially costly decision. Booth successfully helped a dyslexic sue Hillingdon Borough Council for having failed to diagnose her condition and provide adequate support, opening the way for many similar claims.

Cherie Booth QC's activities are a PR dream. As accusations fly about the absence of effective parliamentary opposition, Cherie Booth is a one-woman opposition. How can Blair be an elected dictator, neither tolerating nor receiving effective criticism, when he can cope with this level of domestic dissent? Trust me (as the man often says). Doesn't this prove Britain is now as enlightened as Norway, where Gro Brundtland was a socialist prime minister and her husband a leading Christian Democrat?

But if Ms Booth and Mrs Blair are not two different people, then there must be some uncomfortable moments over the morning muesli. Booth's string of cases represent a significant rekindling of the fires of radical expectations which her husband's rhetoric and spending policies are busily damping down.

Look at a list of plays opening in the West End during, say, the Thirties — almost all are forgotten. Yet at least that number of Hollywood films survive triumphantly from each year of that decade.

While much European "serious" music was heading towards dreary minimalism, the Americans were giving us Gershwin, Armstrong, Cole Porter and Rodgers, Hart and Hammerstein.

In Europe we tend to assume that Great Art is a solitary achievement. Say "artist" and we see a lonely figure in a garret, wrestling with inspiration. But many of the finest American works are communal. (The archetypal American craftwork, the quilt, is traditionally assembled by dozens of women.)

MOVIES are another prime example. The French, unable to cope with the notion of art-by-mass-meeting, invented the idea of the auteur, which is fine if you're discussing Hitchcock or Welles, but useless as an explanation for the magnificent Casablanca.

The funniest British sitcom, *Men Behaving Badly*, is written by one man: the one in America, *Frasier*, is produced by a round-table discussion. Even the most popular American sport, gridiron football, includes a committee meeting every few minutes.

The opening exhibition next week is of Harley-Davidson bikes: what single person designed them? The great Motown pop hits of the Sixties often involved three composers, four or five singers, and squads of producers.

We, almost unconsciously, assume that because Chicago, or Disney's Snow White, were joint enterprises, they cannot be Art. Between now and Thanksgiving, the Barbican seems likely to prove our casual assumptions wrong.

"traditions" which have undermined democracy on the subcontinent. And change has been in the air for some time. The MP Keith Vaz is popular with Asian voters not because of his religion or background but because he is a consummate and conscientious politician. In Bradford, Marsha Singh was elected by a largely Muslim electorate in spite of fears expressed by Muslim extremists.

The focus needs to move to other areas of power too. Recently, Blair spoke passionately about how Britain cannot stand proud until more ethnic minorities are in the upper echelons of British society. Perhaps he forgot to mention his own inner sanctum which he could change overnight if he so wished. Every one of his 54 appointed advisors is white. If Labour takes courage and makes the moves we all want, it will not only benefit hugely from the talents of my community, it will free us from the shackles of our own ignominious past.

The riddle of Mrs Blair and Ms Booth, QC



Ros Coward

ARE Ms Booth QC and Mrs Blair two different people? I only ask because the moment she puts on her wig, it's like Dr Jekyll turning into Mr Hyde. One minute we have Mrs Blair, a modern working woman, wearing designer clothes but demurely supportive of her husband's moderating mission. The next minute it's Ms Booth fighting for justice for all kinds of awkward cases, often on collision course with the Blairite Reformation. Today Ms Booth leads the opposition in a case about part-time workers' pension rights. The Daily Telegraph deemed her involvement "both embarrassing and ironic". It appears to conflict with the key government aim of reducing welfare dependency.

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This woman could cost the Government millions. She could do more damage than the collapse of the Far East economies and roll back her husband's valiant attempts to make welfare affordable for a low- to high-income society.

It looks as if the Blair's have decided that Cherie Booth is nothing to do with them. Another recent controversial case hints at how she is playing it. Booth successfully represented a convicted rapist who wanted the right to sue a woman for libel after she complained about him bombarding her with letters from prison. Many women were outraged. A spokesman for the Bar council said Booth had had to work under the "cab rank rule" by which barristers are supposed to take whichever case comes along. Yet many barristers quietly exercise preference and it is said that before May 1, Cherie Booth turned down certain libel cases. Post-election, she appears to be separating personal views from professional ones more punctiliously than before.

Maintaining a rigid distinction between the professional and the personal is one solution to what is a real problem. Clearly the public are happier with the idea of a wife with a separate professional identity than a spouse with no discernible career. But look at the recent criticisms of Lord Irving and Robin Cook for taking their partners on foreign trips. But exactly how to negotiate that separate identity is uncharted water.

WITH THE increase of career women in government-related jobs, there are likely to be more "husband-and-wife teams", with potential for conflict of interest or just conflict. The only available signposts are negative: don't repeat the Clintons' mistake. When Hillary was given a government position, the public disagreed that this was the logical place for a talented working wife. Instead they suspected a husband and wife team would unfairly stack the deck.

The same suspicions surfaced last week over revelations that Jack Straw's wife was a non-executive director of Littlewoods, which is regulated by the Home Office. A Home Office spokesman had to deny the Straw's would ever chew over policy questions at home — "They just don't. They always made a rule not to do that."

The doctrine of Chinese walls has failed to work in the City without heavy policing. At home, it creates Jekylls and Hydes. Whilst the pragmatists may believe in their creations, the public often doesn't. Once it is established that Ms Booth is anyone's for the taking, the composition of the tail queue will change. It may no longer be random but full of people who see advantages, in terms of publicity if nothing else, in having the prime minister's wife as QC.

Why do we Brits insist on turning up our noses at American culture? Could it be, asks **Simon Hoggart**, that we sneer at Disney for all the wrong reasons?

Cents and sensibility

YOU probably hadn't heard, but this week the Barbican Centre in London opens inventing America, the biggest festival of American culture ever seen outside the United States.

It will last 11 months, and includes an astonishing array of film, drama, dance, classical music, opera, jazz, rock, painting, literary readings and craftwork, featuring some of the finest American performers alive today.

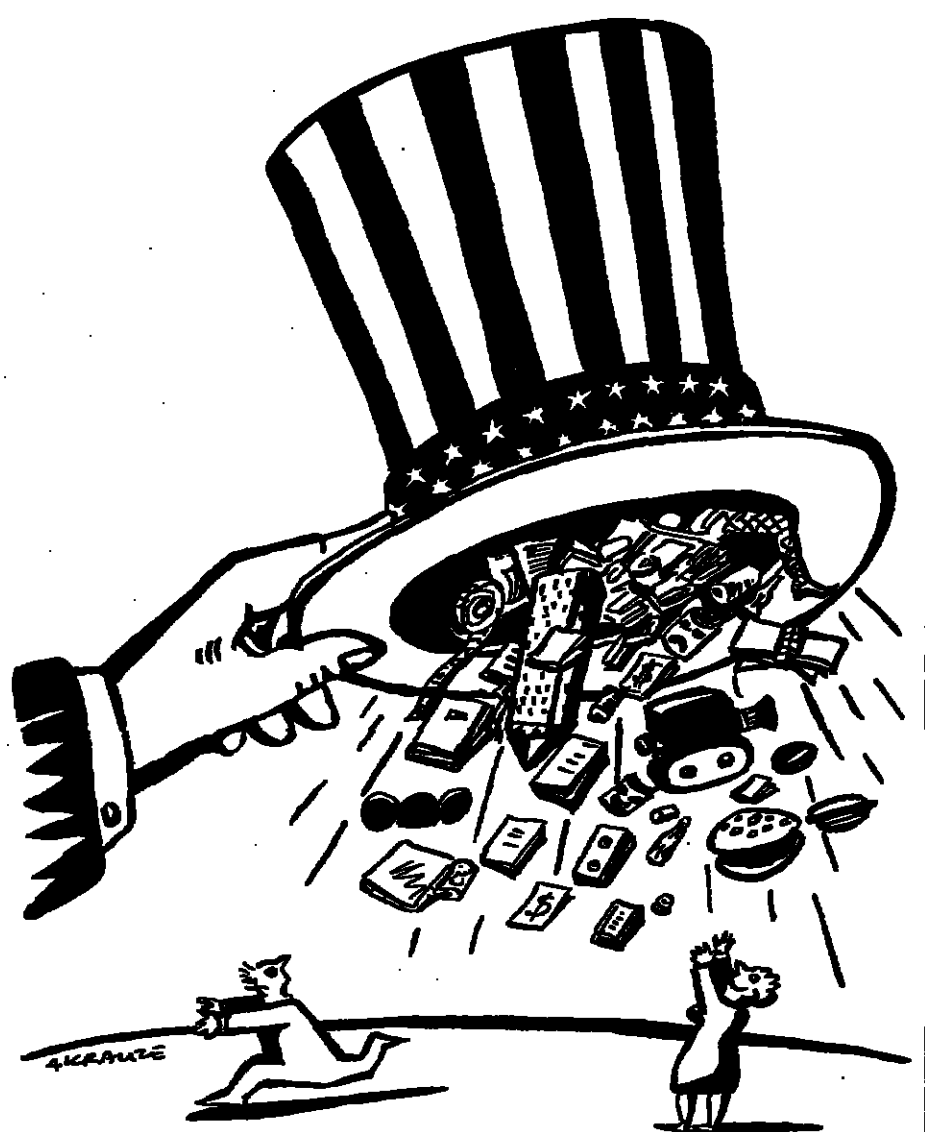
The festival will also no doubt provide plenty of opportunity for wisecracks here to shake their heads sadly and explain that "American culture" is really a contradiction in terms.

What is it that we resent about the American art? Why do we feel we have to keep our mouths shut as unthinkingly as the French rail against MacDonald's? Why are we so eager to believe that, for example, because most US disc jockeys sound like axe murderers with legions, there can be no decent music there?

This easy sneering exists as a cultural cringe in America too. Educated Americans quite often feel, deep down, that real culture is what happens in Europe. I remember a fascinating friend in Washington who told me he had never been to California, "because if I had the time and money, I would go to London or Paris instead."

We snigger at the oil millionaires going to show off at the Houston Opera, as if our own Royal Opera House, when open, is stuffed only with the cognoscenti to whom every bar of Strauss's Elektra is as dear and familiar as Fur Elise.

It is true that Americans sometimes overcompensate for this double cringe — their sense of inferiority about feeling culturally inferior. Would Whistler and Hopper and Georgia O'Keeffe fetch anything like those prices if they were not American? If Cop-



land is such a great composer, how is it that no one can whistle anything more than the opening bars of Fanfare For The Common Man? It's reported that The Color Purple is now read by more American students than any one Shakespeare play.

But behind our easy snobbery is a sense that Americans spend their lives slobbered out either behind the wheel or in front of the television — as if most Britons were any different, except in the greater poverty of our aspirations.

The fact is that America is

stuffed to the gunwales with artistic talent and enterprise. It just doesn't always take the same form as traditional European pursuits.

Though we are beginning to catch up here, modern American architecture is vastly more exciting than our own.

Not the right sort of Asians



Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

JUST BEFORE the election, I thought that the relationship between Labour and ethnic minority party supporters showed all the symptoms of a crumbling marriage. Black and Asian Britons felt betrayed and taken for granted after nearly 30 years of dutifully handing over their votes (over 75 per cent of them vote Labour) in the hope that one day their time would come. I thought then that we should keep faith partly because Labour did not harbour overt bigots like the Tories and

partly because the long years of Tory rule had proved calamitous for so many of us. This conviction is fast becoming exhausted. Right through Christmas, murmurs of disaffection rumbled, particularly among British Asians who were fed up, not about headstrong Harriet or tobacco advertising or evanescent principles, but the shortage of accomplished Asians in politics. The mess over Mohamed Sarwar in Glasgow, Govan has discharged a dark mood of dependency and the consensus is that the Labour leadership does not know us. Those expressing most disillusionment are dynamic, professional people with none of the obsequiousness that their parents felt was a condition of their acceptance. And they, we want some answers.

Where among Blair's babes are the innumerable successful British Asian women? Why does the party only court rich Asian businessmen, many of whom despise ordi-

nary Asians or manipulative brokers who present themselves as community leaders? Black Britons have been nominated to select bodies on the basis of their individual talents, but the only worthy Asian, it seems, is one with money or voters in his pocket and an obliging smile on his face. As the largest of the minority groups, with a remarkable number of high achievers, it is scandalous that we should be marginalised and as badly represented as we are.

Modernisation is overdue. If the party can successfully promote women, there is no excuse not to use similar strategies for Asians. But first they need to accept that historical relationships and mechanisms have become obsolete. The symbiosis between MPs like Max Madden and Gerald Kaufman and their Asian constituents was genuine but based on patronage and gratitude. It was also mostly man to man. Asian women did not count. Over the years, these

MPs lived with the black vote, based on sub-continental politics, but when it was used against them — as in Gordon and elsewhere — there were complaints of "unfair" practices. The methods were not unfair but injudicious because they kept Asian voters in mental ghettos. Predictably, any disciplinary action taken was denounced as racist by those with particular partisan interests. This always works because racism does prevail within many local parties.

GEORGE Galloway, MP, spoke of "stirring racial tensions" when the Sarwar controversy first arose in 1996, and the writer Meg Henderson later wrote bitterly about how such accusations stifled genuine discussion and scrutiny in Govan.

But the community is now mature and increasingly confident. We can take justified criticism without crying racism. We reject the dubious

"traditions" which have undermined democracy on the subcontinent. And change has been in the air for some time. The MP Keith Vaz is popular with Asian voters not because of his religion or background but because he is a consummate and conscientious politician. In Bradford, Marsha Singh was elected by a largely Muslim electorate in spite of fears expressed by Muslim extremists.

The focus needs to move to other areas of power too. Recently, Blair spoke passionately about how Britain cannot stand proud until more ethnic minorities are in the upper echelons of British society. Perhaps he forgot to mention his own inner sanctum which he could change overnight if he so wished. Every one of his 54 appointed advisors is white. If Labour takes courage and makes the moves we all want, it will not only benefit hugely from the talents of my community, it will free us from the shackles of our own ignominious past.

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Peter Diamond

A diplomat at the festival

HERE ARE two kinds of festival director: the enthusiast, usually either a cultured amateur or at least someone principally interested in feeding his own enjoyment of the arts; and the professional, whose approach is more arm's-length, working to a standard and formula that may be his own or may be imposed on him. Peter Diamond, who has died aged 84, belonged to the second category.

Diamond was best known in the UK for having been director of the Edinburgh Festival from 1965 to 1978, in succession to Lord Harewood, who belonged to the opposite description, that of an enthusiast who wanted primarily to please himself. But before Edinburgh, Diamond was general manager of the Holland Festival (1948-1965), where his image could not have been more different to the one he developed in Edinburgh.

Like a barrister who has to appear to change his sympathies in different cases, Diamond was a superb diplomat who could organise his programming to suit the demands of the venue. The Dutch government wanted his arts to be seen as forward-looking and adventurous, and the festival to have the prestige of presenting first performances and attracting the best new talent. Following his brief, Diamond made the Holland Festival an avant-garde event, giving local composers such as Peter Schat the facilities to mount large-scale dadaistic operas like *Labyrinth* (not however performed until after he left in 1965) that brought in young audiences and international critics.

During the festival Amsterdam's artistic night-haunts buzzed all night with excited comment and argument. And taking part were many of the international big composers of the moment: Luciano Berio, Bruno Maderna, Luigi Nono and Mauricio Kagel, not to mention Boulez, his French disciples and such figures from Britain as Cornelius Cardew and the Manchester school composers. Although the occasional Mozart and Verdi opera was given in the festival, as well as period music from the excellent Dutch chamber groups, the emphasis was on the modern, in music, dance and performance art.

During his years in Amsterdam, Diamond's name was synonymous with experiment because that was his brief. When he went to Edinburgh, he gave his audiences, for the most part, excellence based on the traditional and familiar, and programming aimed to please audiences.

The Edinburgh Festival committee consists of some members of the cultural es-



Diamond... at ease with both the experimental and the traditional

establishment and a majority of city councillors, not many of whom have much knowledge of, or particular interest in, the arts. They help to fund the festival, which brings much money to local hotels, shopkeepers and even public services, but they prefer the programming to be safe and conventional. Harewood changed that for a while, his prestige as the Queen's first cousin sufficiently outweighing the council for him to get his own way without interference. But the royal magic wore off and Harewood made the mistake of being too democratic as well as controversial. This made it easier to attack his policies and he left with no attempt made to retain him after only four years in the job.

Diamond brought all his diplomatic skills to the festival, keeping his remoteness, wary of the press and building a nucleus of international artists willing to come back annually for a pitance of what they earned elsewhere. Throughout the year he kept in touch with his singers, conductors and best-known soloists, so that he moved in their circles and retained their confidence.

In Edinburgh he put on prestigious performances of repertoire works, often in collaboration with companies recording the works, so that popular operas like *Carmen*, with Teresa Berganza and other big stars, could be seen at the festival at a partially subsidised cost before becom-

ing available on disc. Yet although the bulk of his programming was conventional, and always performed by the best available executives, there still remained something for the collectors of new or unusual works. These were simply buried in the complete bill of fare in a way that would invite as little adverse comment as possible.

Diamond never attempted to give a major emphasis to a composer such as Schönberg or Janáček, as Harewood had. But he brought Harnoncourt to conduct a series of Monteverdi operas, introduced a concert performance of Nono's *Intolleranza* (the only time it has been heard in Britain) and cunningly staged two performances of Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*, a major but controversial Wozzeck-like opera. In 1972, eight years after its German premiere and two after the composer's suicide, he staged a production of this work, deeply pacifist in its inspiration and featuring scenes of carnality and violence such as has always awakened the puritanical wrath of the Edinburgh bourgeoisie in the past, was given, with no advance notice of its contents, on a Saturday night — too late to get any coverage in the Sunday tabloids, who were always on the look-out for a scandal — and again on the following Monday, when it was too late for the popular dailies to realise that they had

missed a target. The national broadsheets covered it decorously and the main thrust of the festival as far as the public was concerned was given that year to the operas of Bellini, Verdi and Beethoven, safe and popular fare, along with the usual celebrity concerts.

Diamond took little interest in the drama side of the festival and delegated all non-musical activities to his deputy. When he left, the festival again changed its character under the more colourful and flamboyant direction of John Drummond, whose career there was rather like Harewood's. No one in Edinburgh seemed to realise that Diamond had another full-time job, which he candidly did not mention in his Who's Who entry: he was also manager and advisor to the Orchestre de Paris, which explained why sometimes not available during the year at the festival's London office.

He also had other consultancies, many acquired through his attendance at meetings of the Association of European Music Festivals, which were undoubtedly more useful to him than to Edinburgh. He was very affronted when, after 14 years, his contract was not renewed, but continued to pursue his other duties.

Diamond was born in Berlin and educated at the Schiller-Realgymnasium and Berlin University, where he studied law and journalism. He left Germany in 1933 because of the Nazis (he was Jewish) and became secretary to Arthur Schnabel, the distinguished pianist, and, in 1946, assistant to the director of the Netherlands Opera. He remained his artistic adviser until 1965, in addition to his position with the Holland Festival.

Among his honours was the CBE in 1972, an honorary doctorate (LLD) from Edinburgh University and many awards and medals from Holland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy and France. Outwardly austere, he was generally well-liked and could be very personable and witty in private or with congenial company. His name will always be associated with excellence tempered with caution. Different people viewed him in different ways: he was a private person but urbane, a careerist who hid the enthusiasm that his knowledge and taste hinted was always just below the surface.

He was married twice, first to the pianist Maria Curcio in 1948 (the marriage was dissolved in 1971) and then to Sylvia Rosenberg, the American pianist. He is survived by one son.

Peter Diamond, impresario and festival organiser, born 1913; died January 16, 1998



Haunting image... Robert Mitchum and Shelley Winters in *Night of The Hunter*, shot by Cortez

Stanley Cortez

Painter with a movie camera

CHARLES Laughton's only film as director was an eerily beautiful parable of good and evil, *Night of The Hunter* (1955), much of the quality of which is due to the atmospheric cinematography of Stanley Cortez, who has died aged 83.

The stylisation derived from German Expressionism and American Primitive paintings, and the use of irises and other silent film techniques, also echoes D W Griffith's rural dramas. Robert Mitchum as the psychopathic preacher-murderer pursuing two children through a nocturnal landscape, Lillian Gish guarding a brood of orphans like a mother hen and the murdered Shelley Winters's hair streaming out under water are some of cinema's most haunting images.

"Every day I consider something new about light, that incredible thing that can't be described," Cortez said. "Of the directors I've worked with only two have understood this: Charles Laughton and Orson Welles."

Yet although Cortez did a wonderful job on *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), Welles found him "a criminally slow cameraman". Welles had used the fast-working Gregg Toland on *Citizen Kane* and was irritated by the lengthy time Cortez took to light a scene, and the way he talked about photography in painterly terms. But the shimmering dark look he got for the dinner party scene, the purity

of light during the sleighride (achieved by arc lights on the snow suggesting the glare of the sun) and the way in which the camera tracks in long, unbroken shots through the abandoned mansion gained Welles's unconditional approval.

Cortez was born Stanislaus Krantz in New York's Lower East Side, the son of Austrian Jewish immigrants. As a child, he wanted to be a conductor but as a teenager got a job at Edward Steichen's photographic studio. He decided to enter films when watching his older brother Ricardo Cortez (born Jacob Krantz), whose Latin lover looks made him change his name, being directed by D W Griffith in *The Sorrows of Satan* (1926).

In Hollywood, Cortez became assistant cameraman on

Cecil B DeMille movies at Paramount, before becoming one of the youngest first cameramen in the world at 25, assisting Karl Struss, George Barnes and Charles Rosher. Before *Ambersons*, Cortez had worked on mostly B-thrillers, but Welles had been impressed by the cinematography of them, especially *The Black Cat* (1931), with Basil Rathbone and Bela Lugosi at Universal.

It was while filming *Since You Went Away* (1944), the weepiest, longest and biggest hit about the second world war home front, that Cortez entered the Army Signal Corps. Cortez and Lee Garmes, who finished the picture, were Oscar-nominated for the best black and white cinematography. On his return from active service,

during which he photographed the Yalta and Quebec conferences for the newsreels, he returned to Universal, where he shot *Smash-Up* (1947) featuring Susan Hayward in her first starring role. Cortez not only created effects that made audiences see the world through the eyes of a drunk but made Hayward look ravishing. Hayward repeatedly asked Cortez to photograph her in future films.

Surprisingly for someone of his exalted reputation, Cortez worked rarely with the best directors. Although he shot Fritz Lang's *The Secret Beyond The Door* (1948) and two films for Sam Fuller — *Shock Corridor* (1963) and *The Naked Kiss* (1964) — he found himself photographing B-movies such as *Neu! Is The Night Monsters* and *The Ghost In The Invisible Bikini* (both 1966) at the latter end of his career.

His last prestigious film was *The Bridge At Remagen* (1969), of which he remarked: "I changed nature by making everything that was fresh and bright look almost monochromatic with bleak greys, browns and umbers. It was a war picture, so I dulled the greens of summer to keep the mood grim, warlike." It is this ability to paint with the camera that characterises the best cinematographers, among whom Stanley Cortez stands high.

Ronald Bergan
Stanley Cortez, cinematographer, born November 4, 1908; died December 23, 1997



In the pot light... Cortez (right) with Orson Welles on the set of *The Magnificent Ambersons*



1998 Observer sports calendar

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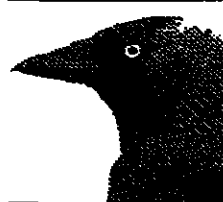
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Jackdaw



Holy water

SHORTLY after dawn, Veer Bhadrar, a Hindu priest, dressed in traditional Indian dhoti, or loin cloth, walks slowly and stiffly down a long steep stairway from his temple in the city of Varanasi to the banks of the Ganges, as he has done almost every day of his fifty-eight years.

Varanasi is one of the oldest continuously occupied cities in the world, contemporary with the dynasties of ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia. But while no one sacrifices to the Egyptian sun god Ra or to Baal anymore, some sixty thousand devotees take the holy dip each day in Varanasi, lighting fires along the shores of the Ganges to Lord Shiva, the god who is believed to have caught the river on the tangled locks of his hair as it descended to Earth from Heaven.

"Please consider them an endangered species these people who still have this faith, this living relationship with the river," Mishra says with passion. "If birds can be saved, let this species of people be saved by granting them holy water."

Mishra, as the mahant of Santar Mochan Temple, is himself the living link to one of Varanasi's most cherished legacies. He is spiritual heir to a greatly revered Hindu saint, Tulsi Das, who in the 16th century wrote a famous Hindi version of Ramayana, one of the most important texts of Hinduism.

The New Yorker bathes in holy water.

Robo lingo

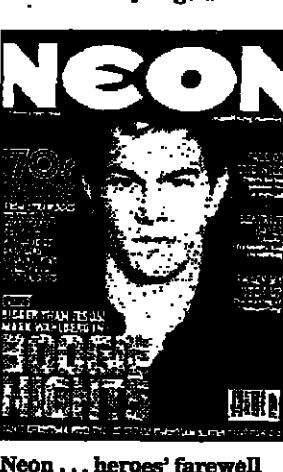
REMEMBER the last time you were on holiday abroad? In particular, those embarrassing moments in a Spanish tapas bar, or a Parisian bistro, when you searched your memory bank in vain for a few crucial words of O-level French or Spanish to give the waiter your order?

Now imagine a future free of such humiliation. This time you no longer need to fumble with a dictionary; instead you have a hi-tech helper — in the shape of a tiny device just under the skin at the back of your head. This "brainlink" connects you to a computer which "tells" your brain how to communicate in French or Spanish, guaranteeing you will never again accidentally order a plate of horse-meat when all you fancied was a nice green salad.

From focus magazine.

The big crunch

OUR SUN will shine steadily for five billion more years before swelling and vaporising our planet. The universe, however, will probably last for another hundred billion. It is expected to collapse eventually, but might first dilate by a factor of one followed by a million zeros. Its expansion is possible even if it has always been infinitely large. Inf-



Neon... heroes' farewell

nately many galaxies, scattering across infinite space, could keep getting further apart. Infinity being a large number, some of the galaxies could well contain exact duplicates of you and me. With sufficiently many typing monkeys, even Hamlet would get typed many times.

Given enough time, strange things could happen. An electron could find its motions controlled by an equally insignificant positron tugging at it ever so weakly from ten billion light years away. After a while, the electron could find its zeros were as many as all the atoms within reach of our telescopes, neutron stars would collapse to black holes — entities so dense even light rays cannot overcome their gravitational pull — through their parts suddenly changing to rush together, as quantum theory allows. Conceivably, though, only another fifty billion years separate us from a time when everything will start collapsing towards a Big Crunch.

B&B RIP

TRAGICALLY, Beavis and Butt-head have died. Their last work was aired on MTV on December 20, showing them failing to turn up at Highland High School and later being discovered dead. Though their career spanned only four years, they managed to revitalise the career of Glenn Danzig and boosted the flagging American microwave nacho industry. The pair will be buried under the headline: "Beavis and Butt-head RIP. Hurhur, you said pee." They will be missed.

Neon pays tribute to Beavis & Butt-head.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 115 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Dorothy Jeffree

Pioneer enabler

DOROTHY Jeffree, who has died aged 84, was a pioneer in supporting parents who wanted to help their disabled children to learn and to develop.

Working at the Hester Adrian Research Centre at Manchester University in the early 1970s, she helped to develop workshops for parents of young children with learning disabilities (then called mental handicap), in which parents learned to assess and teach their own children, with the backing of other parents and unobtrusive support from professionals.

The assumption that assessment and teaching could, quite properly, be the domain of parents was relatively new and controversial at that time. Today it is accepted and used throughout the world.

During the 1970s, Jeffree led several research projects developing approaches to parents working productively with their own children. Arising from this work, she launched, with colleagues, a highly successful and influential series of books known as the "Let Me" series: *Let Me Speak*, *Let Me Play*, *Let Me Read*, *Let Me Count*, *Let Me Make Toys*, as well as *Let's Join In* and an introductory

book, *Teaching the Handicapped Child*.

Although these books were primarily addressed to parents, they have been used by thousands of teachers and translated into many languages. Written in a clear, accessible style and usefully illustrated with simple line drawings, they are based both on common sense and extensive practical experience, as well as on the author's detailed knowledge of research. She also published highly influential developmental charts for the use of parents and practitioners.

Jeffree's career exemplified the best tradition of translating research to practice. Her earlier experience in Rudolf Steiner schools and as a teacher and headteacher enabled her to understand the practical implications of research and translate it into activities which could be used by anyone.

She continued to write and teach long after retirement. Her writings will be used and remembered worldwide.

Peter Mittler
Dorothy Maud Jeffree, educationalist, born June 17, 1913; died December 23, 1997

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

IN AN article headed "Alarm at killer traffic fumes", Page 2, January 14, the name of the chief executive of the National Asthma Campaign was given as Melinda Betts. Her surname is Lettis.

IN A PANEL, Page 3, G2, January 14, we gave the age of

the comedian Norman Wisdom as 77. He is 82 (he'll be 83 on February 4).

ON PAGE 8, G3, January 15, we printed the initials of the Cuban film institute, ICAIC, in the wrong order.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mays, by telephoning 0171 339 9589 between 11am

Birthdays

Desi Arnaz Jr, actor, 45; Peter Atkinson, Conservative MP, 55; Julian Barnes, writer, 52; Nina Baydon, novelist, 73; John Bercow, Conservative MP, 35; Tom Cox, Labour MP, 68; Michael Crawford, actor and singer, 56; Bernard Dunstan, painter, 73; Stefan Edberg, tennis player, 32; Phil Everly, rock singer, 59; Jacky Fleming, cartoonist, 43; Wayne Hemingway, fashion designer, 37; Patricia Hodgson, director, policy and planning, BBC, 51; Hans Hotter, bass baritone, 89; Richard Lester, film director, 68; Brig Helen Meachie, former director, WRAC, 60; Nigel Nicholson, author and former MP, 81; Robert Palmer, rock singer and guitarist, 48; Dolly Parton, country music singer and actress, 52; Javier Perez de Cuellar, former United Nations secretary-general, 78; Sir Simon Rattle, conductor, 43; Mike Reid, actor and comedian, 58; Malcolm Reilly, rugby league coach, 50; Sir John Stanley, Conservative MP, 56; Joan Stapleton, actress, 75; Steve Staunton, footballer, 29; Gary Streeter, Conservative MP, 43; Dennis Taylor, snooker player, 49; David Tredinnick, Conservative MP, 48; Margaret Wingfield, former president, National Council of Women, 86.

and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 339 9607. E-mail: readers@guardian.co.uk

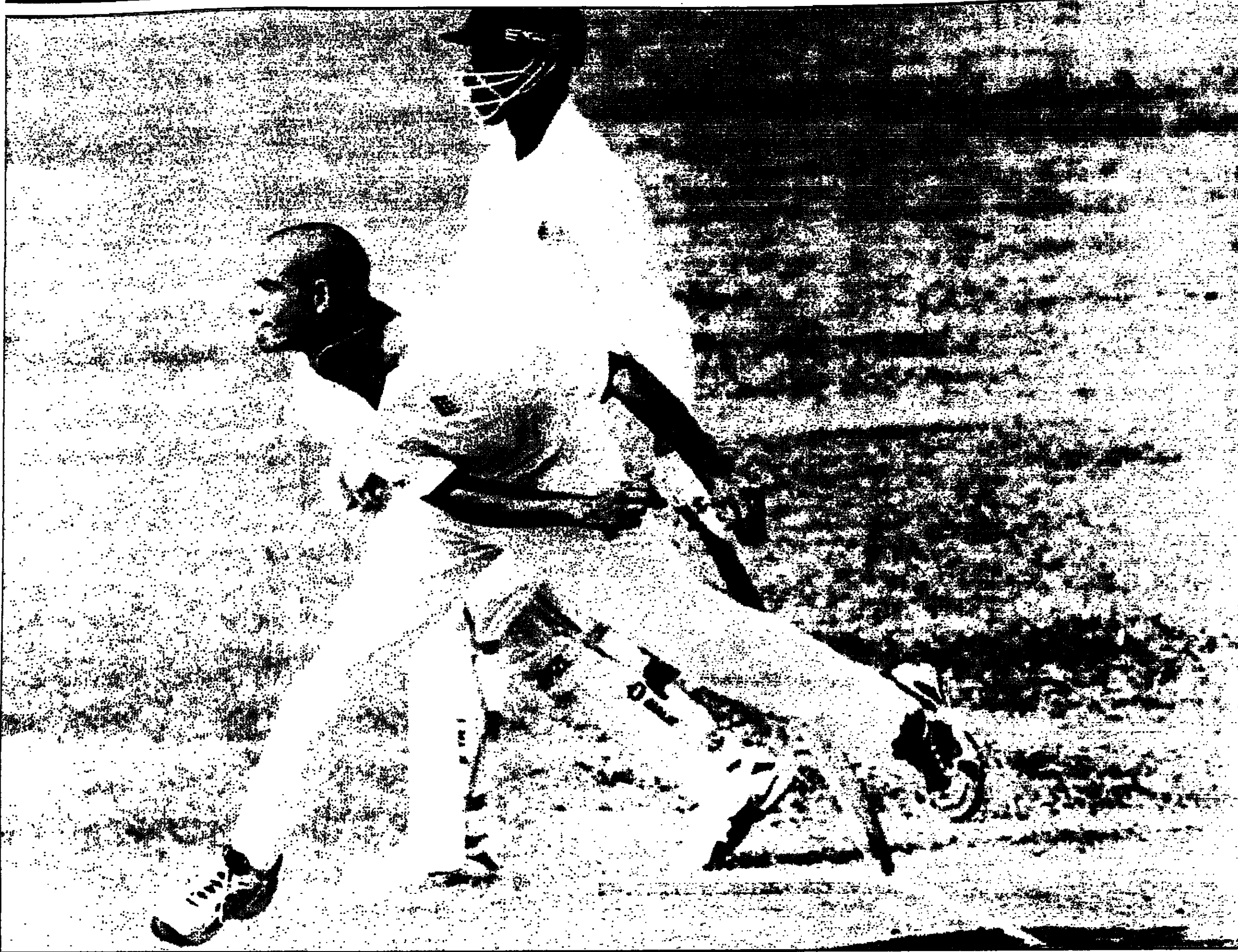
Births

BROOKFIELD, Jamie, 2 brother for Stuart and Deborah 1997. Thanks to all the excellent and expert care.

To place your announcement in the Births and Deaths section, please call 0171 339 9589 between 11am

بكتا و الجاني

Atherton condemns 'dangerous' pitch



Fast and furious... Dean Headley, who took nine wickets in the match, fires down another bullet against Jamaica at Jarrett Park where England won by an innings and 65 runs in the first match of their tour

PHOTOGRAPH: REBECCA NADEN

Tour match: Jamaica v England XI

England dig deep for victory

Mike Selvey sees the tourists come through triumphant and unscathed despite a baptism of fire at Montego Bay

FOR the England team, this match at Jarrett Park has been not so much a gentle entry into the Caribbean tour as a rite of passage, like circumcision or body piercing, something that had to be done but with reluctance and trepidation in equal measure and with the hope that not too much pain is inflicted on the way.

That the England batsmen survived unscathed on such an appalling pitch was, in part, down to the benevolence of Courtney Walsh in not subjecting them to the terrifying prospect of him and the rejuvenated Patrick Patterson bowling fast on the equivalent of a corrugated roof.

The England bowlers played their part by dismissing Jamaica, 108 for eight over-

night, for the addition of 17 runs yesterday morning — 12 short of avoiding the follow-on — and then for 96 in the second innings to win emphatically by an innings and 65 runs.

The villain of the piece has been a pitch on which England, mindful of the damage that one rogue delivery can do — say, to Alec Stewart's venerable right forefinger — would have been forgiven for condemning before the start.

Had Jamaica avoided the follow-on, there would certainly have been a case for immediately pulling the plug on England's second innings since discretion would have been much the better part of valour in such circumstances.

"This was a substandard pitch for a first-class game," the England captain Michael

Atherton said afterwards. "It was damp at the start and obviously uneven. The key was that our batsmen applied themselves and worked out a way to score. Today when it picked up in pace it was a dangerous pitch."

Dean Headley's opening delivery of the morning, for example, leapt from a length to hit Kirk Powell on the forehead and the ball with which he finished Jamaica's first innings left a trail, like that of a snail, as it shot insidiously along the ground and hit the very base of Onell Richards's off stump.

By contrast, successive deliveries of even bounce and pace have been as rare as a Rastafarian with a No. 1 crop. To play in such conditions batsmen need to jettison the MCC Coaching Manual and

rely instead on aviation charts for the high fliers and a map of the Bakerloo Line for the scuttlers.

Even fielding has been a lottery, with Jack Russell keeping to the pace bowlers while wearing a helmet and with the luxury of a long-stop.

Fourteen byes in Jamaica's first innings — and 15 in the England innings — might have been many more had the outfield not been allowed grown to a height that might have passed for golf-course rough at the US Open but which is inappropriate for a cricket match.

"Why don't you lower your mower blades?" David Lloyd asked the groundsman before the game. "My mower," replied the groundsman by way of explanation, "is me."

The job still has to be done, of course, and early note will have been taken across the Caribbean of the bowling, in particular that of

Headley who took four for 14 in the second innings to go with five for 35 in the first, and the batting in general, but particularly that of Graham

Thorpe, whose 89 was his highest score in the West Indies.

The downside was the proliferation of no-balls: 21 in Jama-

ica's first innings and 10 in their second. The pitch has no bearing on the bowling of such deliveries, and Headley, with 11 in the first and only one in the second as he gained his rhythm, and Phil Tufnell, with 16 in all, have no excuse. A win cannot mask slapdash cricket and there is work to be done.

It took Headley, bowling in tandem with Tufnell, a little more than half an hour to finish off the first innings, and once Atherton enforced the follow-on there was little doubt that the game would not enter a fourth day.

The demerits, though, was rapid with only the opener Robert Samuels, with 26, preventing extras from top-scoring in both innings and the tail-ender Brian Murphy adding 23 to his 26 in the first before he was last out, caught at long off by Stewart. Headley took three wickets in four overs and when Andy Caddick bowled Andre Coley, the job was all but done at 75 for eight.

England's chairman of selectors David Graveney said that, with the tour continuing until the second week of April, Gough had a realistic chance of joining the party. "That possibility, providing he regains full fitness, should be a major incentive for him during his rehabilitation."

However, with the Test series ending on March 24 it would appear Gough's best chance of playing on the tour is in the five one-day internationals that round it off.

Scoreboard

ENGLAND XI		Jamaica	
First innings (overnight, 179-5)		First innings (10, 30, 68, 71, 75, 80, 101, 111, 114)	
G P Thorpe c Samuels b Murphy	89	R G Samuels c Russell b Headley	26
R G Russell c Coley b Williams	22	R G Samuels c Russell b Headley	26
A R Caddick b Williams	22	R G Samuels c Russell b Headley	26
D W Headley not out	16	R G Samuels c Russell b Headley	26
Score (100, 1st)	108	R G Samuels c Russell b Headley	26
Total (for 8 dec, 120.3 overs)		Total (for 8 dec, 120.3 overs)	
Fall of wickets: 218, 222, 226		Fall of wickets: 21, 39, 55, 66, 68, 69	
Did not bat: A R Fraser, P C Tufnell, S J Birtles, S J Birtles		Did not bat: A R Fraser, P C Tufnell, S J Birtles, S J Birtles	
1st-2nd-3rd-4th-5th-6th-7th-8th-9th-10th-11th-12th-13th-14th-15th-16th-17th-18th-19th-20th-21st-22nd-23rd-24th-25th-26th-27th-28th-29th-30th-31st-32nd-33rd-34th-35th-36th-37th-38th-39th-40th-41st-42nd-43rd-44th-45th-46th-47th-48th-49th-50th-51st-52nd-53rd-54th-55th-56th-57th-58th-59th-60th-61st-62nd-63rd-64th-65th-66th-67th-68th-69th-70th-71st-72nd-73rd-74th-75th-76th-77th-78th-79th-80th-81st-82nd-83rd-84th-85th-86th-87th-88th-89th-90th-91st-92nd-93rd-94th-95th-96th-97th-98th-99th-100th-101st-102nd-103rd-104th-105th-106th-107th-108th-109th-110th-111th-112th-113th-114th-115th-116th-117th-118th-119th-120th-121st-122nd-123rd-124th-125th-126th-127th-128th-129th-130th-131st-132nd-133rd-134th-135th-136th-137th-138th-139th-140th-141st-142nd-143rd-144th-145th-146th-147th-148th-149th-150th-151st-152nd-153rd-154th-155th-156th-157th-158th-159th-160th-161st-162nd-163rd-164th-165th-166th-167th-168th-169th-170th-171st-172nd-173rd-174th-175th-176th-177th-178th-179th-180th-181st-182nd-183rd-184th-185th-186th-187th-188th-189th-190th-191st-192nd-193rd-194th-195th-196th-197th-198th-199th-200th-201st-202nd-203rd-204th-205th-206th-207th-208th-209th-210th-211st-212nd-213th-214th-215th-216th-217th-218th-219th-220th-221st-222nd-223rd-224th-225th-226th-227th-228th-229th-230th-231st-232nd-233rd-234th-235th-236th-237th-238th-239th-240th-241st-242nd-243rd-244th-245th-246th-247th-248th-249th-250th-251st-252nd-253rd-254th-255th-256th-257th-258th-259th-260th-261st-262nd-263rd-264th-265th-266th-267th-268th-269th-270th-271st-272nd-273rd-274th-275th-276th-277th-278th-279th-280th-281st-282nd-283rd-284th-285th-286th-287th-288th-289th-290th-291st-292nd-293rd-294th-295th-296th-297th-298th-299th-300th-301st-302nd-303rd-304th-305th-306th-307th-308th-309th-310th-311st-312nd-313th-314th-315th-316th-317th-318th-319th-320th-321st-322nd-323rd-324th-325th-326th-327th-328th-329th-330th-331st-332nd-333rd-334th-335th-336th-337th-338th-339th-340th-341st-342nd-343rd-344th-345th-346th-347th-348th-349th-350th-351st-352nd-353rd-354th-355th-356th-357th-358th-359th-360th-361st-362nd-363rd-364th-365th-366th-367th-368th-369th-370th-371st-372nd-373rd-374th-375th-376th-377th-378th-379th-380th-381st-382nd-383rd-384th-385th-386th-387th-388th-389th-390th-391st-392nd-393rd-394th-395th-396th-397th-398th-399th-400th-401st-402nd-403rd-404th-405th-406th-407th-408th-409th-410th-411st-412nd-413th-414th-415th-416th-417th-418th-419th-420th-421st-422nd-423rd-424th-425th-426th-427th-428th-429th-430th-431st-432nd-433rd-434th-435th-436th-437th-438th-439th-440th-441st-442nd-443rd-444th-445th-446th-447th-448th-449th-450th-451st-452nd-453rd-454th-455th-456th-457th-458th-459th-460th-461st-462nd-463rd-464th-465th-466th-467th-468th-469th-470th-471st-472nd-473rd-474th-475th-476th-477th-478th-479th-480th-481st-482nd-483rd-484th-485th-486th-487th-488th-489th-490th-491st-492nd-493rd-494th-495th-496th-497th-498th-499th-500th-501st-502nd-503rd-504th-505th-506th-507th-508th-509th-510th-511st-512nd-513th-514th-515th-516th-517th-518th-519th-520th-521st-522nd-523rd-524th-525th-526th-527th-528th-529th-530th-531st-532nd-533rd-534th-535th-536th-537th-538th-539th-540th-541st-542nd-543rd-544th-545th-546th-547th-548th-549th-550th-551st-552nd-553rd-554th-555th-556th-557th-558th-559th-560th-561st-562nd-563rd-564th-565th-566th-567th-568th-569th-570th-571st-572nd-573rd-574th-575th-576th-577th-578th-579th-580th-581st-582nd-583rd-584th-585th-586th-587th-588th-589th-590th-591st-592nd-593rd-594th-595th-596th-597th-598th-599th-600th-601st-602nd-603rd-604th-605th-606th-607th-608th-609th-610th-611st-612nd-613th-614th-615th-616th-617th-618th-619th-620th-621st-622nd-623rd-624th-625th-626th-627th-628th-629th-630th-631st-632nd-633rd-634th-635th-636th-637th-638th-639th-640th-641st-642nd-643rd-644th-645th-646th-647th-648th-649th-650th-651st-652nd-653rd-654th-655th-656th-657th-658th-659th-660th-661st-662nd-663rd-664th-665th-666th-667th-668th-669th-670th-671st-672nd-673rd-674th-675th-676th-677th-678th-679th-680th-681st-682nd-683rd-684th-685th-686th-687th-688th-689th-690th-691st-692nd-693rd-694th-695th-696th-697th-698th-699th-700th-701st-702nd-703rd-704th-705th-706th-707th-708th-709th-710th-711st-712nd-713th-714th-715th-716th-717th-718th-719th-720th-721st-722nd-723rd-724th-725th-726th-727th-728th-729th-730th-731st-732nd-733rd-734th-735th-736th-737th-738th-739th-740th-741st-742nd-743rd-744th-745th-746th-747th-748th-749th-750th-751st-752nd-753rd-754th-755th-756th-757th-758th-759th-760th-761st-762nd-763rd-764th-765th-766th-767th-768th-769th-770th-771st-772nd-773rd-774th-775th-776th-777th-778th-779th-780th-781st-782nd-783rd-784th-785th-786th-787th-788th-789th-790th-791st-792nd-793rd-794th-795th-796th-797th-798th-799th-800th-801st-802nd-803rd-804th-805th-806th-807th-808th-809th-810th-811st-812nd-813th-814th-815th-816th-817th-818th-819th-820th-821st-822nd-823rd-824th-825th-826th-827th-828th-829th-830th-831st-832nd-833rd-834th-835th-836th-837th-838th-839th-840th-841st-842nd-843rd-844th-845th-846th-847th-848th-849th-850th-851st-85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Football

Premiership: Newcastle 2, Bolton 1

Georgian off his mind for a finale

Michael Walker
sees Ketsbaia's
moment of madness

BIZARRE, spectacular, riveting for 88 minutes. Newcastle United versus Bolton Wanderers warranted none of those descriptions. But then in a stunning last minute, thanks to Temur Ketsbaia, all and more were appropriate. For this was the minute that witnessed the Georgian's descent from slick professional footballer with a fine right foot, calm demeanour and healthy bank balance ... to raging madness.

The fall began in the 80th minute of a disjointed affair in which Nathan Blake had deservedly equalised John Barnes's 20th goal in domestic football and which Bolton were unlikely to lose. In that minute Ketsbaia replaced the straw-weight Jon Dahl Tomasson and ran to where he was sent, out on the left. A couple of characteristic head-down dribbles followed but no breakthrough would come and it seemed Ketsbaia was destined to be part of another hugely unimpressive Newcastle performance.

No doubt this would have been the source of some disappointment both personally and professionally for Ketsbaia, but there was nothing to suggest the depth of the well of frustration he has been drinking from of late. The intensity of his despair, however, was to be shown in the final frantic minute in which he tapped in the winner after Alan Shearer had nodded Alessandro Pistone's cross to Darren Peacock. Keith Brannagan was ruffled by Peacock's challenge and his punch out fell to Ketsbaia.

Now you might think that coming on as a substitute and scoring Newcastle's first winner in the Premiership since November would be the cause of some celebration. But not for Ketsbaia; the Georgian had luncy on his mind. He ran to the advertising hoarding (Adidas — the club's

kit makers) and launched his size nines into it with a biblical vengeance. He then removed his shirt and chucked it on to the Gallowgate. Pistone's attempts to join the jubilation were shrugged off with an elbow of Faustino Asprilla proportions and the Italian was told to get off — Ketsbaia's English is coming on — and he then tried to take off his boots too. Luckily that last red-hot proved too much and, with everyone else beginning to trot back for the restart, Ketsbaia joined them slowly. His anger had not abated, though. Still shirtless, he began shouting towards Kenny Dalglish while making aggressive one-arm gestures. These looked rather unpleasant and Dalglish appeared astounded. At this point John Barnes had seen enough and locked Ketsbaia in a half-nelson of which Mick McManus would have been proud. Ketsbaia was disoriented by this — he and Barnes are said to have continued their spat in the tunnel — and remained half-naked until his shirt was retrieved from the crowd and handed back dismissively by Shearer.

Ketsbaia snatched it from him and put it back on, reluctantly, but he was still not finished. The first time the ball came to him he whacked it sideways straight into touch. It all looked like a most public resignation and his colleagues just stared at him. The final whistle went and presumably Ketsbaia sped off to Northumberland to bark at the moon, but not before icing a fantastical display with the remark: "I know it was unusual but I wasn't angry, I was happy." Of course he was.

Dalglish, publicly, was not angry either — "He's emotional, sure, didn't he burst into tears after scoring in Zagreb?" — but his private reaction was probably somewhat different. It will be interesting to see what part, if any, Ketsbaia plays at Anfield tomorrow night.

Whatever, he can sleep soundly knowing he has given us a moment that will be hard to beat in 1998. Thanks Temur.



Naked aggression ... Pistone tries to calm down a shirtless Ketsbaia at St James' Park

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN GILES

Leicester City 0, Liverpool 0

Elliott the wage earner

Russell Thomas

THE warm applause rippling from the stands at the end could have been for any of the team's sheer effort. Neutral observers were left cold.

Leicester players and management echoed their fans' sentiment, seeing this as a precious point from a contest of unequals, given Liverpool's cash and recent Premier League form. Everyone took pride in the cameo of Matt Elliott towering, physically and metaphorically, over Liverpool's multimillion-seeking Robbie Fowler. The so-called journeyman, on £4,000 a week, eclipsed the so-called star soon to be earning around £40,000 a week.

Liverpool, in turn, intoned respect for their limited hosts. "This is a hard place to play," gushed Jamie Redknapp. "It's always very difficult against Leicester," cautioned Roy Evans, memory nagged by that 1-2 flop in

August against Martin O'Neill's men. No one mentioned that Leicester have not won at home in the league for almost three months. Yet if this, according to Tom Cottee, was "a slightly off day" for Liverpool after five successive Premiership victories, then "there's more to come" — not off days but more quality. Is there? On this evidence, as Cottee conceded, Manchester United can start counting their championship bonuses now.

Even allowing for the problems Leicester pose — and pace and creativity are clearly not among them — this sterile game confirmed that a mediocre pack is pursuing the next-best European prizes on offer.

Only the bespectacled Kasey Keller, allowed largely to make an untroubled study of the visitors, departed from defence to Liverpool. "If anybody has a chance of catching United," said the American, "it will probably be Blackburn. Really it's

United's title to lose." David James had progressively less to worry about — barring a late, low drive from the indefatigable Elliott — as Liverpool maintained their air of improved stability at the back. Dominic Matteo gave another good performance but his side still lack a genuinely commanding defender. Little wonder that, despite the latest managerial details, Elliott and Liverpool continue to be linked.

Steve McManaman ran and ran, usually nowhere. Curiously, considering the success of it in the clubs' first match, Pontus Kasperk was not set to mark him. Arguably the ends justified the change of means.

Another England icon, Liverpool's club captain Paul Ince, is 30 and showing signs of wear and tear. Again the £45 million game confirmed that a mediocre pack is pursuing the next-best European prizes on offer. Perhaps the Lion of Rome has been in too many wars.

Leeds United 1, Sheffield Wednesday 2

Graham cracks the whip

George Caulkin

GEORGE GRAHAM was attired in Saville Row's finest rather than uniform and jackboots, choosing to walk rather than goose-step to his podium in the press-room.

Once there the Leeds manager smiled politely and calmly answered questions for 10 minutes without displaying any hint of his so-called dictatorial tendencies. It was difficult to reconcile this erudite figure with the description penned by the former Leeds midfielder Carlton Palmer, who claimed that Graham "rules by fear".

Until, that is, Graham spoiled it all by calling a halt to proceedings to explain how he had been appointed. Predictably spleen was vented at his favoured minority target, footballers. "The reason why I'm late is that Rod Wallace is offi-

cially on the transfer list," he said. "I told him after the game that the club has now made the decision for him because of a lack of cooperation from him and his agent in sitting down and discussing a new contract. We know Rod's agent is hawking him around other clubs."

This was a strangely soulless Yorkshire demerit pass but no urgency, skill but little application, and effort without ferocity of purpose. When lacking the latter, Leeds are undone.

The exceptions to the tedious were few. Wednesday's Patter Radi offered sporadic glimpses of the close control and distribution which had so terrorised Newcastle the previous weekend, and Harry Kewell offered a similar hollow promise when he was sent on.

If this had been a boxing match Ron Atkinson's side would have been awarded a split decision; Wednesday probably deserved their vic-

tory for the refreshing clarity of their 82nd-minute winner. The right-back Ian Nolan sent a deep cross beyond the far post, where Andy Booth fired in an imperious half-volley. Energy, strength, attitude, commitment and drive were the adjectives Atkinson used later to describe Wednesday's performance, euphemisms for paltry entertainment. It was in keeping with a messy game that the Leeds equaliser had come by default, Mark Pembroke's momentum producing an own-goal after Kewell slanted in a cross.

It was equally typical that, once Graham had attempted to plug the gaps down Leeds' right flank with two half-time substitutions, Wednesday's goals both originated there. For the first time, Beesey had repelled Booth's shot from a Pembroke centre and John Newsome had turned in the rebound. Dictators, you see, are human too.

Tottenham Hotspur 1, West Ham United 0

Redknapp may pay for his passion

Martin Thorpe

CHRISTIAN GROSS must have been pleasantly surprised by Saturday's outcome. Not the fact that his struggling Tottenham side picked up their first league win in four games but that the disparaging aftermath headlines were for once not about him.

One would struggle to find a friendlier, more passionate manager than Harry Redknapp, but at White Hart Lane he let that ardour boil over into anger and as a result faces the possibility of an FA disrepute charge.

So does his Ivory Coast-born striker Samassi Abou, whose sending-off after 42 minutes marred what had been a compelling game of football played hard, but for the most part fair. That was until Abou challenged Stephen Carr for the ball with a robustness that Carr's teammate Ramon Vega failed to appreciate.

As Abou walked by him, Vega deliberately pushed into the West Ham striker who, in retaliation, stupidly kicked the back of Vega's leg.

Vega went down and the linesman alerted David Elleray, who, despite protests from Abou, flourished the red card. The skilful striker, who speaks no English, then compounded his felony by twice grabbing Elleray.

Redknapp had walked down the touchline to prevent further trouble, but the gesture had exactly the opposite effect. Seconds after Elleray had invited Redknapp on to the pitch to pull off the animated Abou, Spurs' Colin Calderwood ran up to the West Ham manager and shouted in his face: "He's kicked him."

Redknapp shouted back, "No, Vega's an actor," and ag-

itatedly pushed Calderwood away. The manager then had to be physically restrained from making his attack.

Redknapp's actions not only worsened an already fraught situation but acted as an incitement to a large chunk of the West Ham crowd who then tried to push their way on to the pitch. Afterwards Elleray said he would send a video of the Abou and Redknapp incidents to the Football Association to see if it required further action.

Redknapp tried to brush off the confrontation with Calderwood. "Did I really push him?" he asked unconvincingly. The manager's views of the Abou incident were equally suspect. He cast doubt on Abou's kick by accusing Vega of "going down as if he were dead" and "getting the boy sent off" but then admitted: "I never saw Abou's kick, to be truthful."

The point is that retaliation in any shape is outlawed. And Abou was wrong not just for hitting back, in getting sent off he undermined West Ham's chances in a game that until then they had largely controlled.

Spurs had taken the lead after a long period of inactivity. Jürgen Klinsmann stretched in front of Rio Ferdinand to direct David Ginola's excellent cross past Craig Forrest for his first goal since his second coming. But West Ham took charge of the rest of the half with Spurs' stand-in goalkeeper Espen Baardens making some excellent saves.

Though Spurs worked hard and Nicola Bert, making his home debut, added drive to their midfield, they failed to extend their lead. But with three points and Les Ferdinand due back from injury next Saturday, things are looking up.

Barnsley 1, Crystal Palace 0

Coppell given food for thought

Derek Potter

APART from talking about the over-fussy referee who booked seven, much of the chat after a robust yet never vicious contest between two teams fighting for survival among the wealthy elite was about hunger.

"I have got my appetite back," said Tomas Brodin, whose figure suggests he has been on a good diet. What the Swedish forward meant, of course, was that he is happy to be at Palace after his troubled spell with Leeds United and he has the motivation to rediscover the fitness that made him a feared player. "It will be three or four weeks before I'm fully fit, and I hope Steve Coppell stays [as manager]; I can work with him."

Neither manager could quibble about the appetite of his players, though. Coppell, who found it too hot in Manchester City's kitchen, could have been excused a nervous twitch or two.

A team with such a powerful away record as Palace must have been hugely disappointed when Brodin's equaliser was disallowed after he followed up a Bruce Dyer shot which hit an upright. Nicky Eaden also made a goal-line clearance from Dyer.

Such recollections will not deter Barnsley, who continue their habit of winning after a savage defeat; in this case the 6-0 hiding at West Ham, described by their manager Danny Wilson "as our worst performance yet".

Despite this fourth league win at Oakwell this season, Barnsley stay at the foot of the table but only four points separate the bottom seven. Moreover they won with teamwork and determination despite the absence of suspended central defenders Arjan de Zeeuw and Adie Moses.

Ashley Ward's winning goal summed up the match. It was the product of a determined run in which he deceived Andy Linighan before firing in a strong shot which beat Kevin Miller, whose earlier save from the hard-working Neil Redfern had kept Palace in the hunt for a 20th away point of the season.

Jen-Aaga Ejiroft, did despite his debut to suggest that his height and experience will be useful back-up for Ward, whose goal was his sixth since his £1 million switch from Derby County.

On their travels Palace are pointed when Brodin's equaliser was disallowed after he followed up a Bruce Dyer shot which hit an upright. Nicky Eaden also made a goal-line clearance from Dyer.

Euro 2000

Groups offer few clues

IT MAY not be the Group of Death — Group Four, with France, Russia and Ukraine, has some claim to the title — but it is tough enough to be going on with. These matters are impossible to establish as the 1998 World Cup finals in France will change the landscape of European football in ways that are guaranteed to surprise us. And then, as the national teams will be re-gear for European Championship qualifying, with new coaches and younger players.

Robert Pryce

The threat to England

Poland
POLES know two things about major championships. They will be drawn in a group with England. And they won't qualify. The first has already come true, but don't count on the second. Polish football is in a mess, with top clubs going bust and leading players deserting the national team, but given the right coach and a concerted effort they could prove to have a team capable of living with the best.

Bulgaria
THE 1998 World Cup may be the last opportunity for an outstanding generation of Bulgarian footballers to shine. The European Championship is likely to be a step too far. Hristo Stoichkov, the defenders' nightmare, will be 34 when the finals come around. Trifon Ivanov, the defender who looks like a nightmare, will be almost 33. And many of the other players elevated to stardom by their success in the 1996 World Cup — including Yordan Lichkov, whose header knocked out West Germany in the quarter-finals — will be well into their thirties.

Sweden
A HOME defeat by Austria should have given some clue; failure to qualify for the World Cup finals in Scotland's group should have confirmed it. Sweden have failed to live up to the promise shown by the likes of Tomas Brodin and Jonas Thern. This tournament may be that generation's last chance to make an impact. Then turns 31 in March, Brodin is just beginning another comeback. Martin Dahlin is still in his prime. A number of younger players, notably Jesper Blomqvist, should be anxious to prove themselves. Sweden may present England with their greatest threat.

The threat to Ireland

Croatia
A wonderfully talented bunch of players needs help from the emerging generation if Croatia are to make a mark on the World Cup and European Championship. The front pairing of Alen Boksic and Davor Suker still looks formidable. Steven Illie and Igor Stumac remain at the heart of the defence, but the midfield needs help. Aljosa Asanovic, the Derby midfielder, has not played for a while and Robert Prosinecki, whose exquisite touch once illuminated the Real Madrid midfield, has been rejected by Barcelona, though his recent performances in the Croatian League suggest that he may not be quite as crooked as he looked.

Yugoslavia
They are over their international suspension — a crushing victory over Hungary in the World Cup play-offs confirmed — and they have the talent to go on making an impact. But they will miss Dejan Savicevic. The free-running midfielder with the blazing left foot, who on his day could be one of the world's most exciting players, is unlikely to play much of a part. He is already 31 and Milan seem ready to write him off.

The threat to Scotland

Wales
ITALY will be overwhelming favourites to head this section even though, in the finals, they have consistently underachieved since their sole triumph in the competition, when they took the trophy in their own country 30 years ago. For Italians, Euro 96 remains a bad memory, but both the team and their scoring form will be confident of another long World Cup run this summer.

Northern Ireland
NORTHERN IRELAND's recent record against Germany has been impressive, including a 1-1 draw in Nuremberg in a World Cup qualifier in November 1996. Curley have promised much for several years but continue to fall short of their potential. Their failure to qualify for next summer's World Cup finals followed a gravely disappointing Euro 96 at which they lost all three of their matches and failed to score.



Quick start
England race to victory in the West Indies
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The Guardian Sport

Monday January 19 1998 www.football.guardian.co.uk



Sharp Speed... Chelsea's Frank Sinclair fails to block the Everton captain's shot as he slots in his team's equaliser from an unsympathetic angle

PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX LIVESLEY

Premiership: Everton 3, Chelsea 1

Chelsea belief ebbs away

Ian Ross

IT IS generally accepted that, on a miserable, unappealing afternoon such as this, Chelsea's little credentials will either be reaffirmed or exposed as of rather dubious substance.

The suspicion has always been that any team who are stuffed to the gills with foreign players will hardly relish the prospect of standing toe to toe with a bunch of desperate northerners when the wind is blowing and the rain is cascading down.

This, possibly, was a suitable occasion to trot out those clichés about northern grit and southern softies, the argument spanning generations and dividing a nation.

Yesterday, Everton's spirit carried them to a fourth win in five Premiership games. Chelsea's lack of spirit condemned them to a seventh league defeat. End of story.

Chelsea's manager Ruud Gullit was angry and he had every right to be. "We were sloppy and you can't be like that at this level," he said. "God teams don't give things away, but we did today. Everton deserved to win the game and now, in terms of the championship, we have a lot to do."

"Chelsea has made some giant steps forward in a short period and maybe I ask a little bit too much of my players sometimes."

Yet Chelsea could have won as comfortably as they eventually lost. Everton often threatened to extend the tra-

ditional scouse hospitality way beyond acceptability.

So generous were they, particularly in a four first half, that Chelsea were not required to add diligence to technique. They simply waited for possession to be presented to them.

Everton's midfield began to resemble a soup kitchen, happily doling out sustenance to any Chelsea player with that needy look.

That Chelsea did not profit, or even shape to take full advantage, was mystifying, for Everton could barely conceal the fact that they were there for the taking. It was an unforgivable timidity which Gullit's men were ultimately to regret.

This was a poor game in poor conditions, an afternoon which did not boast a shot

until the 32nd minute when Everton's Tony Grant struck an advertising hoarding, and one which did not yield a genuine chance until Chelsea deservedly moved in front eight minutes before half-time.

The build-up to the goal resembled such a shining beacon in the thickening gloom that even the Everton faithful must have been tempted to applaud. The execution, though, was messy.

Steve Clarke's cross from the left prompted panic and although Tore Andre Flo's initial effort was blocked by Carl Tiler, he displayed the presence of mind to push home at the second attempt.

The goal will have brought a wry smile to the lips of at least one man steeped in the Everton tradition. Joe Royle's managerial reign at Goodison

Park ended last March after his request to buy Flo from the Norwegian club, Brann Bergen, fell on deaf ears.

Royle's authority had been undermined and he quit. Flo promptly opted for a slightly different shade of blue and, of course, he succeeded in proving a point yesterday.

Astonishingly, Chelsea's lead was to last barely three minutes. Again it was an untidy affair, Gary Speed turning the ball in from an unsympathetic angle as the French forward Michael Madaar protested furiously that his header had been prevented from crossing the line by Frank Sinclair's outstretched arm.

Thereafter Chelsea continued to hold both sway and much of the possession but, significantly, the better of the

opportunities were beginning to fall to Everton feet. Duncan Ferguson and Madaar were to be denied by rather fortunate deflections before Chelsea's resolve — as Gullit later conceded — began to weaken.

Just after the hour Ferguson threaded through a crowded penalty area to reach Nick Barmby's corner and send home a firm header. It was a telling blow from which Chelsea were never to recover.

Even so, it took a bizarre own-goal by Michael Duberry with only seven minutes remaining — a swerving drive into the far corner — to confirm this was to be Everton's day — they rose three places to 13th — and, quite possibly, not Chelsea's season.

Euro 2000

Hoddle remains undaunted

David Lacey in Ghent on a qualifying group to test the manager's mettle

FOR England some familiar waters lie beyond this summer's World Cup. But if Glenn Hoddle is to qualify for the 2000 European Championship in similar style, his team will need to maintain their present standard of navigation.

Yesterday's draw here for the Euro 2000 qualifiers challenged England to repeat the performances, especially the away performances, that have taken them to France. Even if Group Five is not a group of death, most of the other eight appear happy-go-lucky by comparison.

It almost goes without saying that to reach Holland and Belgium, the joint hosts of Euro 2000, England will have to overcome Poland, whom they are clearly fated to meet in perpetuity. But Bulgaria look a bigger threat and Sweden, World Cup semi-finalists in 1994, are due a change of fortune after failing to qualify for France.

Luxembourg, Hoddle's other opponents, swore in 1983 that they would never entertain English opposition again after their little national stadium was trashed by visiting fans for a second time. Paul Philipp, the Luxembourg coach, cited Euro 96 as a good omen but any misbehaviour by England fans in France will not do much to change the Grand Duchy's mind.

With the nine group winners and the best runners-up joining the two hosts in the tournament proper, England's group is obviously going to be tight. The remaining eight second-placed teams will play off home and away to produce the last four qualifiers.

After the draw Hoddle marked down Bulgaria as the main danger. "They gained respect throughout the game for their performances in the last World Cup," he said, "and they could be our biggest problem."

"But in the World Cup qualifiers we won a group which contained Italy, Poland and Georgia and this is really no different; Bulgaria are not quite as strong as Italy and Sweden are a bit better than Georgia, that's all. And at least we're going to familiar places; we certainly know our way to Poland. The difficulty is going to be the strength of the opposition."

It is not easy at this stage to envisage where that strength will be concentrated. Although Bulgaria reached the semi-finals of the 1994 World

Cup by knocking out the holders Germany, they are an ageing side. The Poles, on the other hand, have been concentrating on youth development and as Tommy Soederberg, Sweden's coach, said yesterday: "Many of our squad get regular experience against England players in the Premiership so that should be an advantage for us."

There can be little England and Poland do not know about one another. With the exception of Euro 96, for which England qualified automatically as hosts, they have now joined the Poles in five successive qualifying competitions for World Cups and European Championships. For Hoddle the good news is that so far England have not been beaten.

The last time England met Sweden in a major tournament, however, Graham Taylor's team went out of the 1992 European Championship after a 2-1 defeat in Stockholm. Indeed England have

If this is not a group of death, most of the others appear happy-go-lucky

yet to beat the Swedes in a competitive fixture.

Ron Greenwood's superior England side, the team of Kevin Keegan, Trevor Brooking et al, twice beat Bulgaria 2-0 on the way to the 1990 European tournament. The last time the countries met Terry Venables' team won a warm-up for Euro 96 1-0.

The qualifiers start in September and when England negotiate fixture arrangements with their Group Five opponents they will hope that all but one of their home games can be at Wembley, where rebuilding is due to start in June 1999. The remainder will probably be played at Old Trafford.

Scotland are in one of the four six-nation groups, where the Czechs and Bosnia will be their rivals. Yugoslavia and Croatia pose the main threat to the Republic of Ireland in Group Eight, and Northern Ireland face Germany for the second successive qualifying competition.

In Group One Wales are up against Italy, Denmark, Switzerland and Belarus. Their manager Bobby Gouldid, however, did win the FA Cup with Wimbledon 10 years ago, and that after beating Liverpool in the final.

The danger men, page 15

Paul Hayward on the welcome and timely return of England's most lethal striker

Shearer raises the roof

NEWCASTLE supporters think the pic after the club's name stands for Players Leave Continually. How joyous, then, that the exodus of exotic bodies should be halted by the return of potentially the greatest Georgie of them all.

Seldom can the unzipping of an anorak have unleashed such euphoria. Just before 4.30pm Alan Shearer undid his sensible coat to stomach-flipping acclaim and galloped out to save Newcastle and their fans from themselves. Elsewhere in England, Andy Cole probably shuddered as he considered his chances of seizing the No. 9 shirt in France this summer, while Liverpool's Michael Owen doubtless felt merely a hopeful pup once more.

The most important season of Shearer's career had gone 33 games without him and the club he so adored as a boy had slipped into mediocrity and rancour. But such is the force-field around England's foremost striker that Kenny Dalglish must have been tempted to give him a phone-box in which to change from sidelined superstar into saviour of the Georgie universe. Every stage of the disrobing was cheered like a scene from The Full Monty, and suddenly Newcastle looked a whole team again with a hit-man to occupy the wasteland of their fake forward line.

As Faustino Asprilla exited stage left, muttering paid-for regal thoughts (Dalglish has lost the plot etc), Shearer entered stage right. It was much later than he would have liked in the context of 90 minutes against Bolton, but far sooner than medical science would normally

allow. Packed thighs and bulging calves were testament to the amount of sweat he has expended in the gym. If Robbie Fowler thinks his worth £50,000 a week, what should Shearer's little brown envelope contain?

A strong suspicion emerged on Saturday that Dalglish is being let down by some of his players. Among supporters, this is the truth that dare not speak its name.

It must bring immense relief to Dalglish to know that no whips need to be cracked around the feet of Alan Shearer.

His presence also compels any malingers in the team to get a move on and encourages the side to believe that games really can be won.

Shearer's body language would have made a good instructional video for aspiring youngsters. He knew the best he could hope for was a place on the subs' bench but wasn't keen to stay there for long after the half-time tea had been taken. He admitted to pestering Dalglish and his assistant Tommy Burns long before he was finally let off the leash after Bolton had equalised through Nathan Blake. Shearer had been sprinting up and down the sleet strip of the sideline with increasing vigour and casting agitated looks at his manager.

"The fever gripping St James' Park may prove to have broken at the point when the now 34-year-old John Barnes trudged off to be replaced by Shearer at centre-forward. Barnes had done his job all right, scoring Newcastle's first goal — but 90 minutes of predatorial endeavour is now beyond him. The slower Barnes



Leaping into action... Shearer warms up for the moment everyone has been waiting for

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN GILES

has become, the further back he has been shifted in the team, but when Shearer, Asprilla and Ian Rush were all absent he found himself rushed back to the front, where he has performed with considerable valour and skill.

Shearer's contribution to a narrow and fortunate win was a couple of neat flick-ons and a header back across the goal to Temur Ketsbaia, who finished the move but then started what may have been the most violently-composed resignation

letter in history, kicking the hoardings, ripping off his shirt, waving his fist at the bench and shoving teammates.

In his first 18 minutes of action in six months, Shearer can claim to have played a significant part in Newcastle's first league victory in nine matches.

Good news for Newcastle, and a national triumph for England.

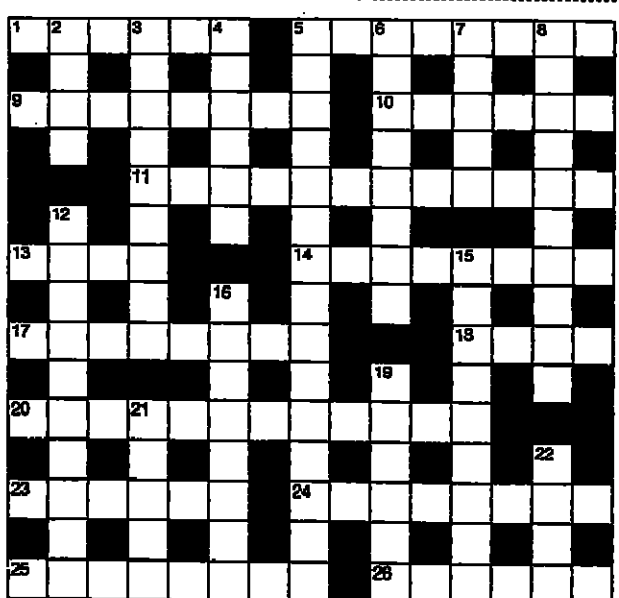
Michael Walker, page 15

The Verdict

"It's a massive boost for us. But I think you've got to hang fire for four weeks. Alan's been out for a long time with the injury and, just because you come back and put a shirt on, it doesn't mean he's fit. I think we all need to be cautious and I'm sure Alan will be. We've got to make sure he gets through the next four weeks. Once he does that, gets through that amount of football, then hopefully we'll have a fit Alan Shearer."

Glenn Hoddle

Guardian Crossword No 21,175



Across

- 1 Deserter held by soldiers without charge (6)
- 5 A few upset the owner, too (3,2,3)
- 9 Air force admiral? (8)
- 10 Food taken from the hand (6)
- 11 React badly to girl having a free hand (5,7)
- 13 It's bitter beer with nothing in it (4)
- 14 Accomplished players, but not very bright (8)
- 17 Overcame the fires of thirst? (8)
- 18 Does wrong, gets lines (4)
- 20 Record playing in the small hours — mood indigo? (12)
- 23 Sung or spoken at church (6)

WINNERS OF PRIZE PUZZLE 21,168
This week's winners of a Collins English Dictionary are Michael Swift of Corsest, Co. Durham, John Morris of Leeds, Michael Monaghan of Harrogate, Andy Leggett of Knaresborough, Germany, and D L Alfred of Brighton.

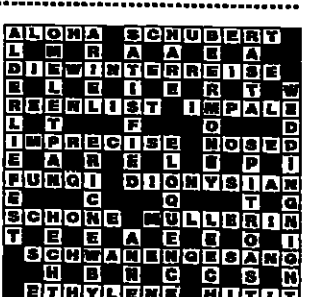
27 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 1 233 233. Calls cost 20p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATS

- 24 There should be a flight to get you here (8)
- 25 Criminal taking a couple of fools in (8)
- 26 Gloomy doctor takes a year off (6)

Down

- 2 Drum music (4)
- 3 Staff of police (8)
- 4 Searches thoroughly and flushes out (6)
- 5 Heading for disaster in car bound for Fountains Abbey, say (2,3,4,2,4)
- 6 Mummy would soon go to pieces were it not for him (8)
- 7 How to arrest wear in a new engine (3,2)
- 8 City's victory over another (10)
- 12 Grows in waves (10)

Set by Rufus



Solution tomorrow
NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up of 41% of the raw materials for UK newspapers in 1997

سكوت من الالبر